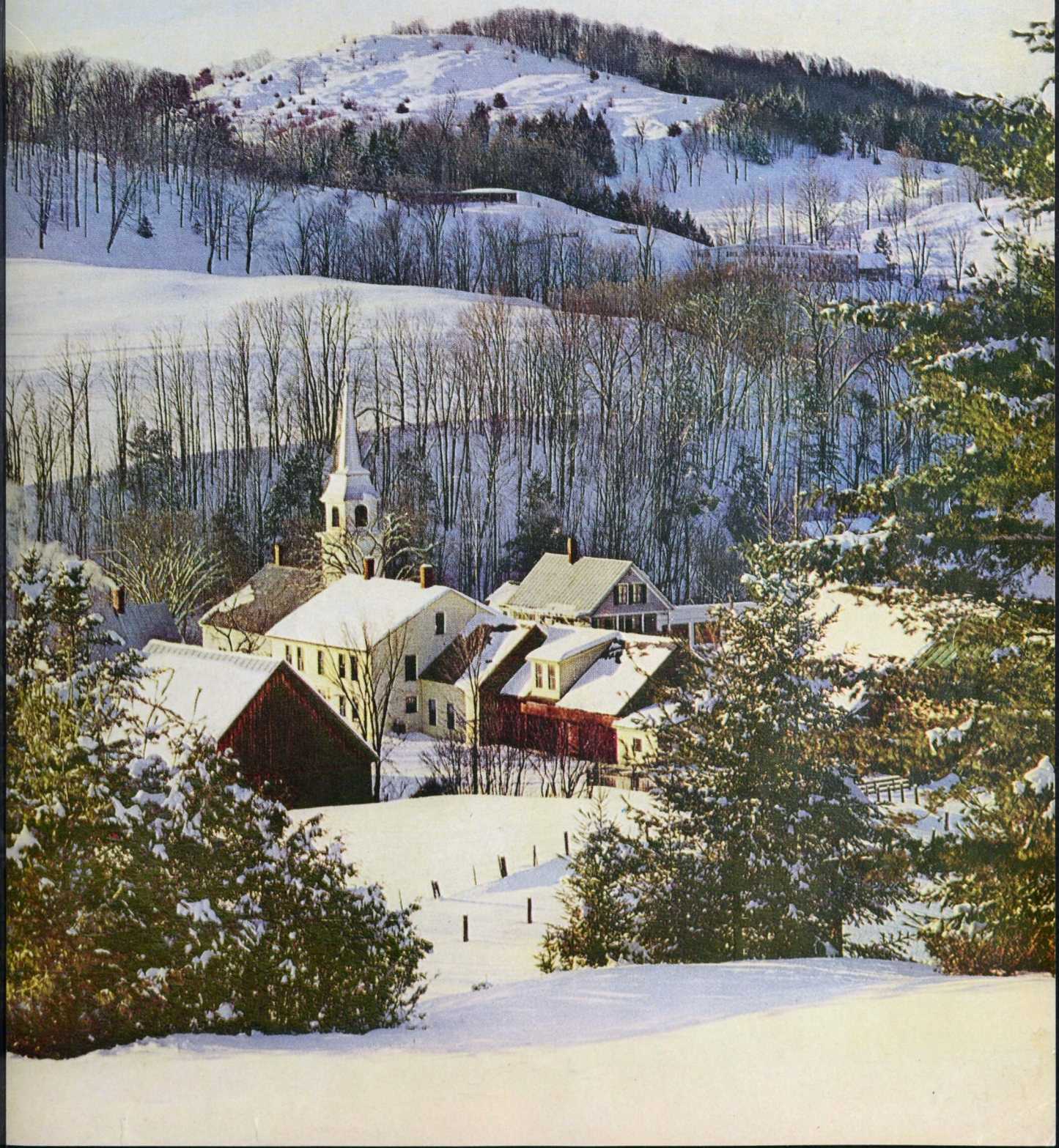
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
LIBRARY
NOV 18 1961

VERMONT Life

VOL. XVI · NO. 2 · 50 CENTS
Winter 1961



VERMONT *Life*

VOLUME XVI NUMBER 2

THAT FREQUENT RECURRENCE TO FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND A FIRM ADHERENCE TO JUSTICE, MODERATION, TEMPERANCE, INDUSTRY AND FRUGALITY ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO PRESERVE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY AND KEEP GOVERNMENT FREE. [VERMONT CONSTITUTION]

The Editor's Uneasy Chair

Imperialism—Inadvertently last summer's issue stated that Vermont reached northward to the 47th parallel at one point, thus in effect laying claim to foreign soil almost to the Quebec City limits. Even Ethan Allen would have hesitated to go so far, and we hasten to reassure our good Canadian neighbors. We hereby abrogate any such expansionist claims.

* * *

New Face—VERMONT LIFE just recently has completed the conversion of all its subscription records to a newly redesigned IBM card—a staggering operation even when done mechanically, which required 1,240,000 card passes through various electronic machines.

The main benefit to subscribers is that now the expiring issue is shown on the address label, at the end of the top line thus: SP 62, SU 62, F 62, W 62, etc. Now also we can address *both* Mr. & Mrs. and show the complete first name—if it isn't too long. There are 21 characters available for title and name.

This year for the first time VERMONT LIFE is taking subscriptions and gift orders on a billed basis. The day of reckoning will come in mid-January.

Currently the magazine has some 14,000 donors who give a total of 25,000 subscriptions—about half the total subscription list. Nine thousand of these 14,000 donors give only one gift subscription—a fact we are grateful for none-the-less.

But if every VERMONT LIFE donor added one more friend to his gift list, the total increase would allow an even better magazine, and our circulation manager would consider it a most happy Christmas present.

As before, we ask that postal zones be given where they are available, and that six weeks be allowed for address changes.

W. H. JR.

CONTENTS • WINTER 1961-62

East Corinth—*Winston Pote* . . . . . COVER

A Day With the Browns—*Bullaty-Lomeo* 3

Eighteen-Hundred & Froze to Death—*Sylvester Vigilante* 10

Sled Dogs—*Photographed by Kathryn & Aubrey Janion* 12

Revolution on Skis—*Judson Hall, illustrations by Bullaty-Lomeo and Hamilton Greene* 14

Where are They Now?—*Ronald Rood, illustrated by Robert Candy* 18

Winter's Many Faces—*A Scenic Section* 2

The Art of Contrary Thinking—*Robert Snowman* . 4

Bennington Potters—*Jane McCullough & John Ryan, photographed by Clemens Kalischer* . 4

A Town Takes its Picture—*Hanson Carroll* 5

Vermont Cheese—*Louise Andrews Kent* 5

Steeplejack—*Helen D. Barry* 6

Alton Howe farm, Northfield—*Carsten W. Johnson* . . . . . BACK COVER

EDITORIAL BOARD: WALTER R. HARD, JR., *Editor;* RALPH N. HILL, JR., STEPHEN GREENE, MURRAY HOYT, *Senior Editors;* WALTER R. HARD, SR., ELIZABETH GAY, JANET GREENE, *Contributing Editors. Art Direction:* R. L. DOTHARD ASSOCIATES. *Circulation Manager:* PETER W. SYKAS. *Office Manager:* DOUGLAS BERNARDINI. *Photographic Consultant:* GEOFFREY D. C. ORTON.

Published quarterly at Montpelier, Vermont by the Vermont Department of Development.
ROLAND R. VAUTOUR, *Director* F. RAY KEYSER, JR., *Governor*
PER COPY: 50c. PER YR.: $2.00 in U.S., possessions and Canada ($3.50 for 2 yrs.; $5 for 3 yrs.)—Elsewhere: 40c per yr. additional

Copyright 1961 by VERMONT LIFE *Magazine. Second class postage paid at Montpelier, Vermont and at additional mailing offices.* *Published November 21, 196*

Green Mountain POST-BOY

THE POSTBOY'S favorite story of the now-waning deer season concerns a mysterious, large gray mass sighted in the woods above Bolton. Cautious investigation disclosed the person of a prominent Burlington citizen comfortably seated beneath a protective blanket. Suspended above the improvised tepee was the microphone of a hearing aid, by wire leading to one of the nimrod's ears, and tuned to amplify any suspicious noise in the wood. To his other ear was plugged a portable radio headpiece. No kill was reported—except for time.

* * *

Vermont, which pioneered nationally and with exciting results a few years ago in treating the mentally ill with tranquilizers and other drugs, has not stopped there. Another first lies in the helping of mental patients to find their way in the world again.

"Halfway" rehabilitation homes, begun five years ago in Montpelier and then in Burlington, are setting a national example in aiding those who are really cured but not ready, all at once, to face a strange and possibly hostile world. For one who has been in an institution for as long as twenty-five years, such a change isn't easy.

But already sixty-nine per cent of Vermont's mental patients who have entered the rehabilitation programs are gone: have jobs and are firmly settled in normal community life.

Vermonters and Vermont employers are rather proud of all this, and they know that they, themselves, are profiting, by learning to understand and to help.

* * *

In the health field again, it is especially appropriate that Vermont was the first state in the U.S. last summer to launch a mobile polio vaccination campaign. For here in 1894 occurred the nation's first polio epidemic; and here, at the University of Vermont's College of Medicine, the first animal experimentation work on polio was started by Dr. Lloyd Aycock.

Eight public health teams riding medically equipped green buses fanned out across the state starting in late June to reach the estimated 94,000 Vermonters who needed one or more shots.

All summer long, week ends and evenings too, they set up at village greens, filling stations, grocery stores, beaches, hayfields, industrial plants and schools. The result: Vermont is now perhaps the best protected state in the country.

* * *

The state's first planetarium, recently opened in St. Johnsbury, got its start, in a sense, from an article in this magazine. A story on the Fairbanks Museum (*Museum Where Things Happen.* VL, Spring, 1955) mentions Director Frederick Mold's hopes for a "poor man's planetarium" in St. Johnsbury, prompted donations from many parts of the country.

With the substantial help of local Rotarians, the dream has become a reality in the dome-roofed chamber on the top floor of the Museum. Now energetic Director Mold, who doubles as a science teacher, can put some 3,000 stars and planets (plus the latest satellites) through their paces. He plans to get every school child in town into the planetarium at least once a month, as well as other groups from the county, and Vermont at large. W. H., Jr.

Mystery Picture 20

The first correct location of this Vermont ski scene, filmed by Geoffrey Orton, postmarked *after* midnight, November 20th, will receive one of our special prizes. Please use postal cards.

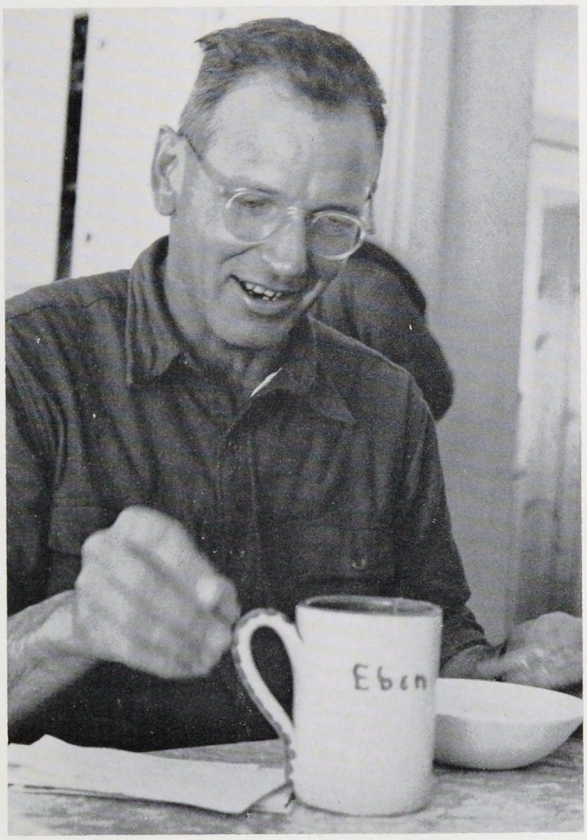
Residents of the county involved are disqualified.

Our Autumn Mystery Picture, a small suspension bridge adjacent to Rte. 14 in Barre, was first identified by Dewey Potter of East Montpelier.

A Day with the Browns

Kids and snow mean fun for the Lazy Farmer with seven jobs

A STORY IN PICTURES BY SONJA BULLATY AND ANGELO LOMEO



HIS stationery gives his name, Eben Brown, and his address, Robin Lane Farm in South Royalton, and this list: Country consultant, Itinerant tree planter, Licensed real estate broker, Private ski school, Finest quality hay, Vermont maple syrup; and then below it says A SERVICE FOR EVERY SEASON.

Yet comprehensive as his letterhead may be for business purposes, the printed summary does not include all his jobs, nor does it describe the Browns' way of life—one he and his wife, Barbara, have created and shared with all comers since they moved to Vermont nearly eighteen years ago.

"Finest quality hay" indicates little of his success as a hard-working dairy farmer. He and his wife arrived from Connecticut in 1943 with all their belongings in the back seats of two cars. Seven years later he had built up a herd of registered Jerseys and made it pay. It had to pay, after Alison and Susan and Philip and Patricia were born; but it did not guarantee much for their education and certainly it left little time to enjoy the children and to take the older ones camping or skiing.

But Eben always wanted to be what he calls a lazy farmer in order to live by his philosophy: any business, no matter how lucrative, is a failure if it allows no time for pleasure.

This outlook was scarcely compatible with operating a one-man dairy farm at a profit, but he never gave up trying. In the Winter he made the time, between milkings, for his favorite hobby of skiing—often with friends from down country who filled the old house on Robin Lane with laughter and music on snowy evenings. These same friends paid their way by returning at other seasons to help with the farm work: storing baled hay or next year's wood supply or, as on one notable occasion, moving and stacking thirty cords of pulpwood by the roadside in a single day. In Summer Barbara made sailing excursions possible by running the farm. Living up to his ideal was more than a one-man project.

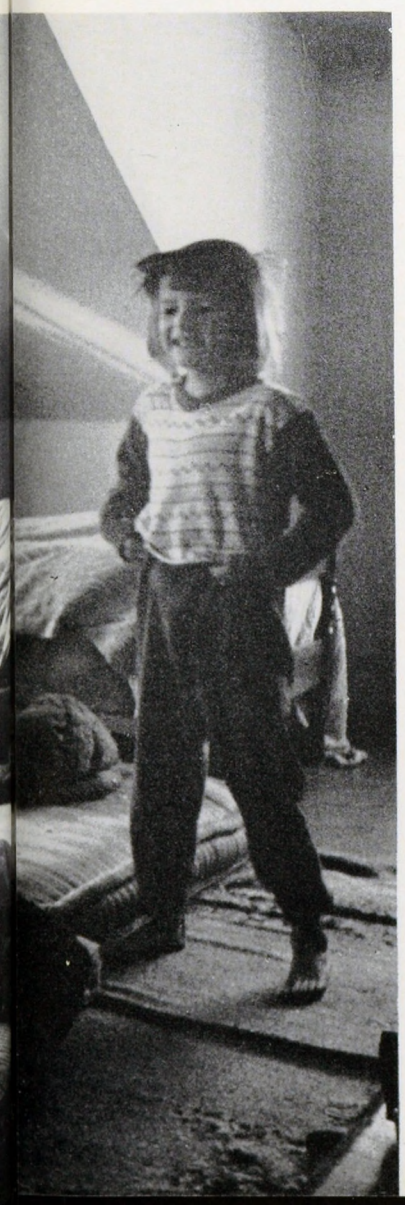
The financial strain of being a small farmer finally prompted him to sell his beloved Jerseys and put his hobbies to work. "Country consultant" means that he offers others the benefit of his own farming experiences. He sugars because he likes to. He sells his hay, and he plants seedling trees for improving woodlots. Recently the addition of "Country real estate" to his other jobs has been one more step toward his goal of being a successful lazy farmer.

All in all, though, "Private ski school" tells the most about life with the Browns. As the youngsters have grown —Martha, their fifth, is almost eight—every spare hour in Winter is spent on skis, with neighbors over to take lessons and share the rope tow their father has built on a slope by the farmhouse.

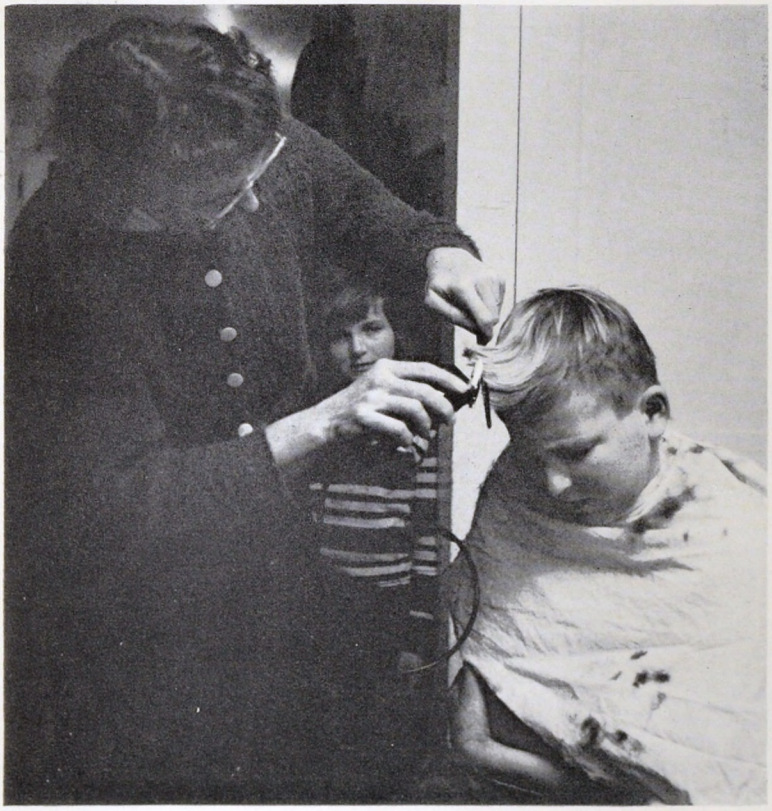
Here in the pictures are the Browns and their children on almost any Saturday in snow time. It begins with yelps from upstairs, where Barbara Brown can always bed down a few extra young friends. Eben spends the day away, teaching his junior ski school in nearby Randolph, while his brood play in their own back yard until he comes home to join them for supper and peace and good-night.

Mansfield — OZZIE SWEET

Sun-up with the Browns

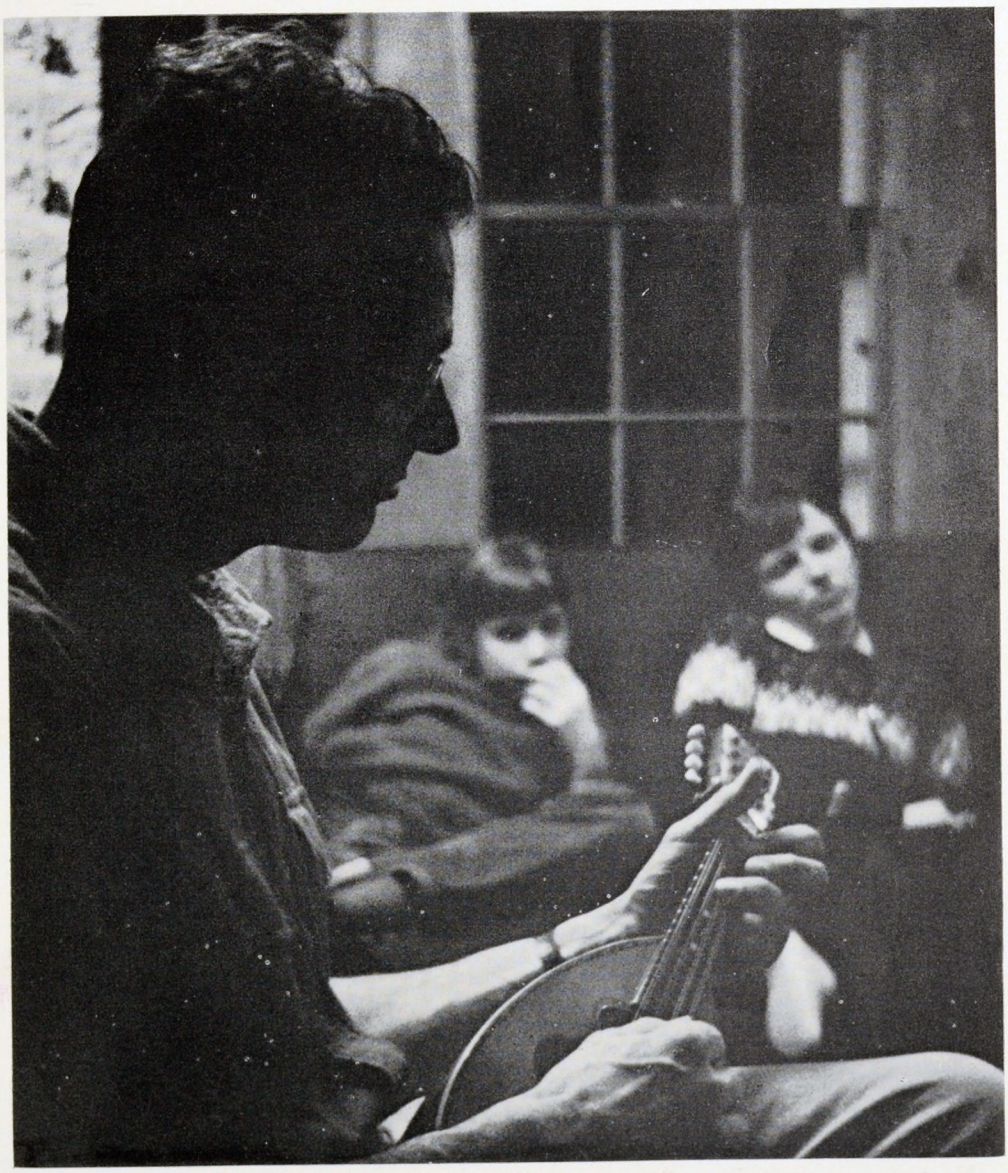


Outdoors with the Browns



Day's end

with the Browns



Eighteen-Hundred-and-Froze-to-Death

S. L. VIGILANTE

THE other day we got to talking about cold. What is the worst weather you can remember? Cold enough to make you move somewhere else? Thirty-five below zero for two weeks straight? Sure, but that was in the winter time. Let me tell you an awesome tale of 145 years ago. It sounds like modern fiction, but isn't.

Vermont has been referred to jokingly as the place with "ten months of clear sparkling winter, and two months of damn poor sleddin'." This year, the strange year of 1816, the "sleddin'," so to speak, was good all year 'round. It was the year that neglected to bother with summer.

The winter had been severe, but the spring began well, the April rains carrying off the last snows from the valleys, and at the end of the month it turned dry and warm. The earth began to come alive, trees blooming, flowers bursting, and the smells of rich dirt and spread manure flooding the countryside.

Harbingers of disaster, however, began to appear in May. It was annoyingly cold, and for Vermont very dry. Some folks blamed the strange times on huge sun-spots which were visible to the naked eye for the first time in memory. They were seen first on May third, and again for a few days around June eleventh.

On the fifth of June the weather was hot—about ninety degrees. Then, the next day, the temperature dropped to about forty, and it snowed, although the flakes melted in most places as they struck the ground. It began to get colder, however, and just over in New Hampshire masons working on a house were forced to halt work when the mortar froze.

Sometime during the evening of June seventh it commenced to snow again. The snow fell through the night, and at Waterbury past noon of the eighth. Around Montpelier the snow was more than a foot deep, and in Cabot, eighteen inches. David Hinman was born on June seventh that year in Derby and, according to family history, on that same day his father had to break ice in the watering trough.

Leaves on the trees were killed, and the beeches remained bare for the rest of the year. Crops that were killed had to be replanted by weary farmers, and most folks were "straight-out" in a vain attempt to combat this extraordinary phenomenon. The land was brown, shrivelled and bare at a time when the sounds, smells and sights of summer should have reigned. Songbirds that had not taken shelter, perished. New shorn sheep froze to death. Vegetation was dead.

And so the "summer" progressed. The ninth of June found ice one-half inch thick on shallow standing water, and icicles a foot long were reported.

In Ryegate most of the corn was destroyed, although some was saved by building fires in the fields. Had it not been for a good crop of oats, many would have been sorely pressed for food. Most people had never tasted oatmeal before; now they were thankful for it.

One of the few people to have any luck that summer was Abraham Sargent, Jr., who somewhere had obtained seed that produced a very early kind of corn. He moved from Randolph back to his father's farm in Chester, New Hampshire, and there grew "a crop of tolerably sound corn which he sold next spring for $4 a bushel for seed, and the farmers esteemed it a great favor to obtain it at that price." (The normal price of corn was about one dollar a bushel). There were also some fair crops of winter wheat, and the price, normally about a dollar a bushel, went up to about $3. Seed corn sold for $5 a bushel in Barnard.

New Englanders were not the only ones with problems. On May thirtieth, there was frost as far south as Virginia, and on July fifth ice was reported in Pennsylvania. The

diary of Isaiah Thomas tells us that the "season has been remarkably dry, in the United States generally, and in many parts of Europe—as has the cold also—crops of hay very short."

July fared not much better than June. Just across the Connecticut River ice was found in a well on July fourth so thick that no water could be obtained save for about a quart from a small hole that had been dug in the ice. It had been there since the end of June, and on July nineteenth, a block of ice as large as a washtub was still in evidence. Some parts of New England got rain but Vermont was still dry as a bone.

August stayed cold, and on the twenty-first produced a frost that killed more corn, beans and potatoes. It was felt as far east as Boston. The mountains of Vermont were covered with snow by this time, and many farmers found it impossible to save any crops. By the end of the month frosts were killing Indian corn south into Massachusetts.

In September the mountains were still snow-covered, and the frigid Vermont drought hung on with a grim tenacity. Many areas of the state had been without rain of any worth for one-hundred and twenty days. Fires swept the parched woodlands, smoke blotting out the sun and filling the air with acrid dust. Corn that had somehow survived, now received a final blow from a severe frost on September tenth. A few crops of poor quality were harvested, including unripe potatoes from a second planting. They were of little value but better than nothing.

There was much suffering but little if any starvation, as the more fortunate shared with needy neighbors. It was a time of fasting and prayer in the churches—a somber time. Without summer crops many did not know where food would come from to last them until spring.

Bringing in food from the outside areas was difficult. Most of the roads, over mountains and through forests, were very bad. Money, also, was hard to come by. Almost the only source for many was the slow and laborious process of converting trees into salts and potash. This would bring no more than thirty cents for a day's work.

During the winter, cattle died of starvation for lack of hay. Those poor people who had no "more fortunate neighbors" could not afford the prices that the scanty food was commanding. Fish became the staple diet. Large seines were operated night and day on many of the rivers, and people in eastern Vermont bartered maple sugar for fish. Other items of diet were boiled nettles, wild turnips, boiled leeks, clover heads and hedgehogs. In New Hampshire 1816 was often referred to as the "Mackerel Year" (other names were "Poverty Year," "Cold Year," and "Famine Year").

The terrible year shook the will and endurance of many, and an exodus to new lands began, many towns being almost deserted. According to Dr. Lewis D. Stilwell in *Migration From Vermont*, folks thought "something . . . had gone permanently wrong with the weather and when this cold season piled itself on top of all preceding afflictions (bad weather had plagued since 1811), a good many Vermonters were ready to quit. Who could blame them?

The town of Richford was nearly desolate, and, according to one observer, those who remained "nearly starved for want of bread; not an ear of corn fit to roast was raised in town." So few people were left in Worcester that no town meetings were held for several years. In 1818 only one family remained. Some were unable to sell their land but they left just the same. Many farms lay fallow for years, until new immigration brought in people who had no memories of the cold years.

Today, real summers are found in Vermont, and they are as nearly ideal as can be found anywhere in the United States, and Vermont in the summer is just as inviting as it is in the winter. But now it's a totally separate season. END

THE OLD SQUIRE

In the time of the sorrowful famine year,
When crops were scanty and bread was dear,

The good Squire's fertile and sheltered farm
In the valley nestled secure from harm.

For the Walpole hills, in their rugged might,
Softened the chill winds' deathly blight,

So the sweet Connecticut's peaceful stream
Reflected the harvest's golden gleam:

And the buyers gathered with eager greed,
To speculate on the poor man's need.

But the good Squire said, "It is all in vain;
No one with money can buy my grain.

But he who is hungry may come and take
An ample store for the giver's sake."

The good old man to his rest has gone,
But his fame still shines in the golden corn.

For every year in its ripening grain,
The grand old story was told again,

Of him whose treasure was laid away
In the banks that seven-fold interest pay;

For to feed the hungry and clothe the poor
Is a speculation that's always sure.

GEORGE B. BARTLETT

From the *Vermont Historical Reader*, by Edward Conant, A.M.

Mr. Vigilante, after many years as head of the New York Public Library's American History Room, retired in 1953. Then, until 1958 he was bibliographer of the New York Historical Society Library. He is an authority on the Bad Men and the Peace Officers of the West. The Vigilantes summer in a remote section of Duxbury.

BALDY
FROSTY
NIPPY
POCOMO

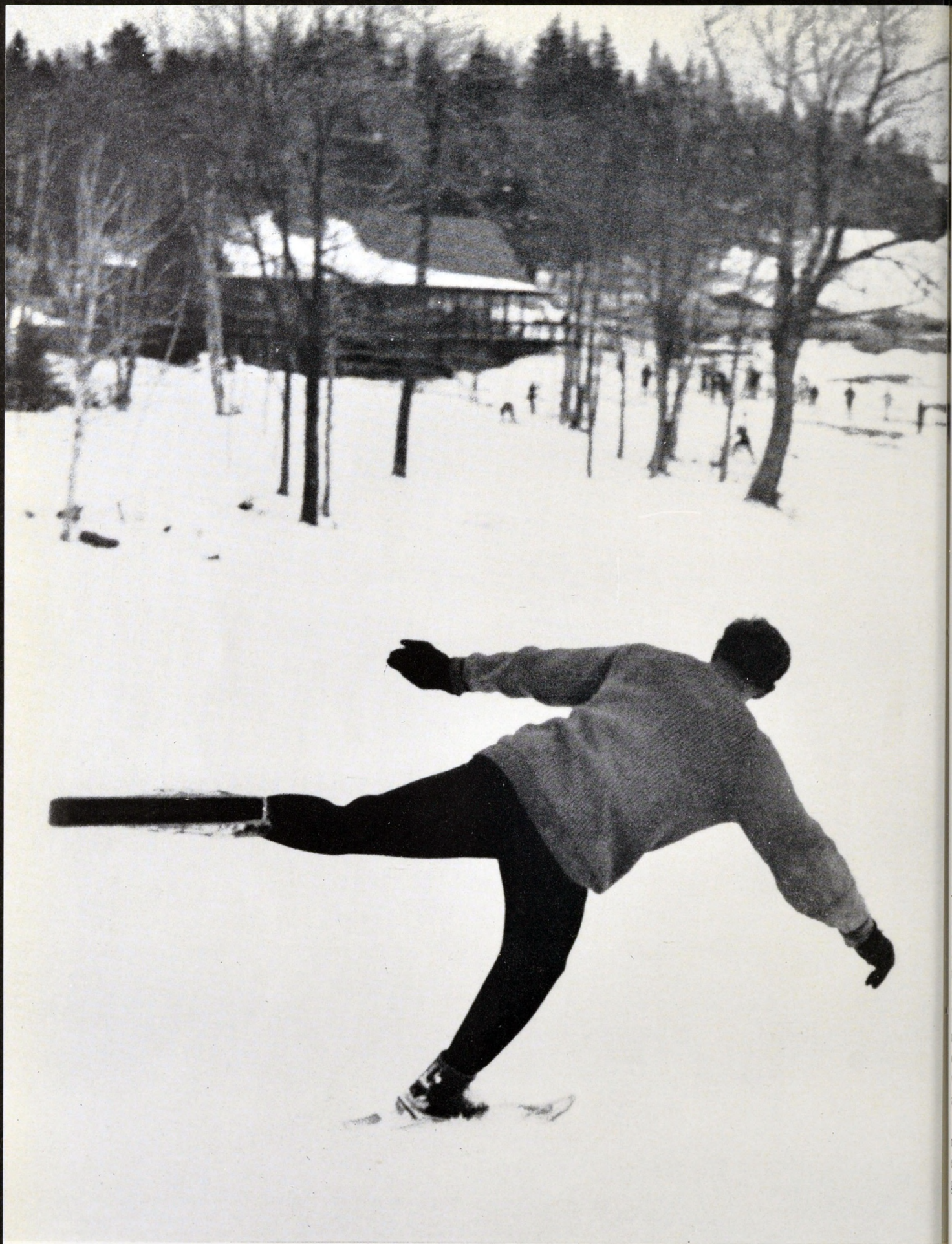
SLED DOGS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
KATHRYN AND
AUBREY JANION

FAST DOGS and hardy men will combine at Waitsfield January 20 and 21 to race for glory and cash in one of Vermont's winter sports highlights. Fifteen teams are expected to compete in this year's New England Sled Dog Club race, run in two heats over eleven miles of snow-packed back roads near Sugarbush Ski Area. Combined winning time last year for the twenty-two miles was 1 hour, 37 minutes, 45 seconds.

As these pictures taken there show, no one breed is favored for speed—snowy Samoyeds are teamed with white-masked Malamutes or with crossbred Huskies; and there is even a team of Irish setters scheduled in this year's event.

Just as varied is the size of the hitch and the weight of the sled. Teams range from five dogs pulling a light sled to as many as eleven dogs hitched to heavier ones. All racers agree, though, that it helps to hop off the sled and run behind on an uphill pull.



Mastermind Clif Taylor cuts a fancy figure on 2½-foot boards at Hogback in Marlboro, hotbed of the short-ski revolt.

REVOLUTION ON SKIS

A new idea cuts skis in half and starts whole families on the slopes.

JUDSON B. HALL

Photographs by SONJA BULLATY & ANGELO LOMEO
Drawings by HAMILTON GREENE

THOUSANDS of new skiers this Winter are gliding down snowy mountainsides with the last word in parallel skiing technique, thanks to a man in Windham County.

The man is Clif Taylor, long-time professional ski instructor, inventor of the 2½-foot and 4-foot wedeln skis for adults, and president of Short-ee Skis, Inc., of Brattleboro. After fifteen years of watching novices learn to snowplow in order to control long skis, he designed and marketed a revolutionary model less than half as long and half as heavy as conventional ones—and his model can be controlled by a simple twist of the foot. Now nine other makers have followed his lead and are making their versions of short-short skis.

Short-short skis designed for adults are defined by Taylor as 4 feet or under, and comparatively stiffer than long skis. Although the Short-ee company also makes a 5-foot ski—which Taylor terms an "outsize shorty"—its current best seller is a rugged 2½-foot job with relatively straight sides and a gradual taper from the toe back to the tail. The firm, which was organized in 1959 and also includes such shorty pioneers as Hal March, Jr., and John Hooper—columnist and editor, respectively, of the *Brattleboro Daily Reformer*—ships Short-ee skis all over the world.

The function of his new short skis is simple, says Taylor: "Just twist your feet and everything else follows naturally." This simple twist fosters easy balance and control, and lets the novice start skiing with the modern wedeln technique whereby he glides downhill gracefully and efficiently with his skis held closely parallel.

"Sure, less running surface means less speed for the racer," he concedes. "But remember that short-short skis eliminate the need for the old snowplow, and they get beginners up on the big slopes faster."

(PICTURE STORY ON THE NEXT TWO PAGES)

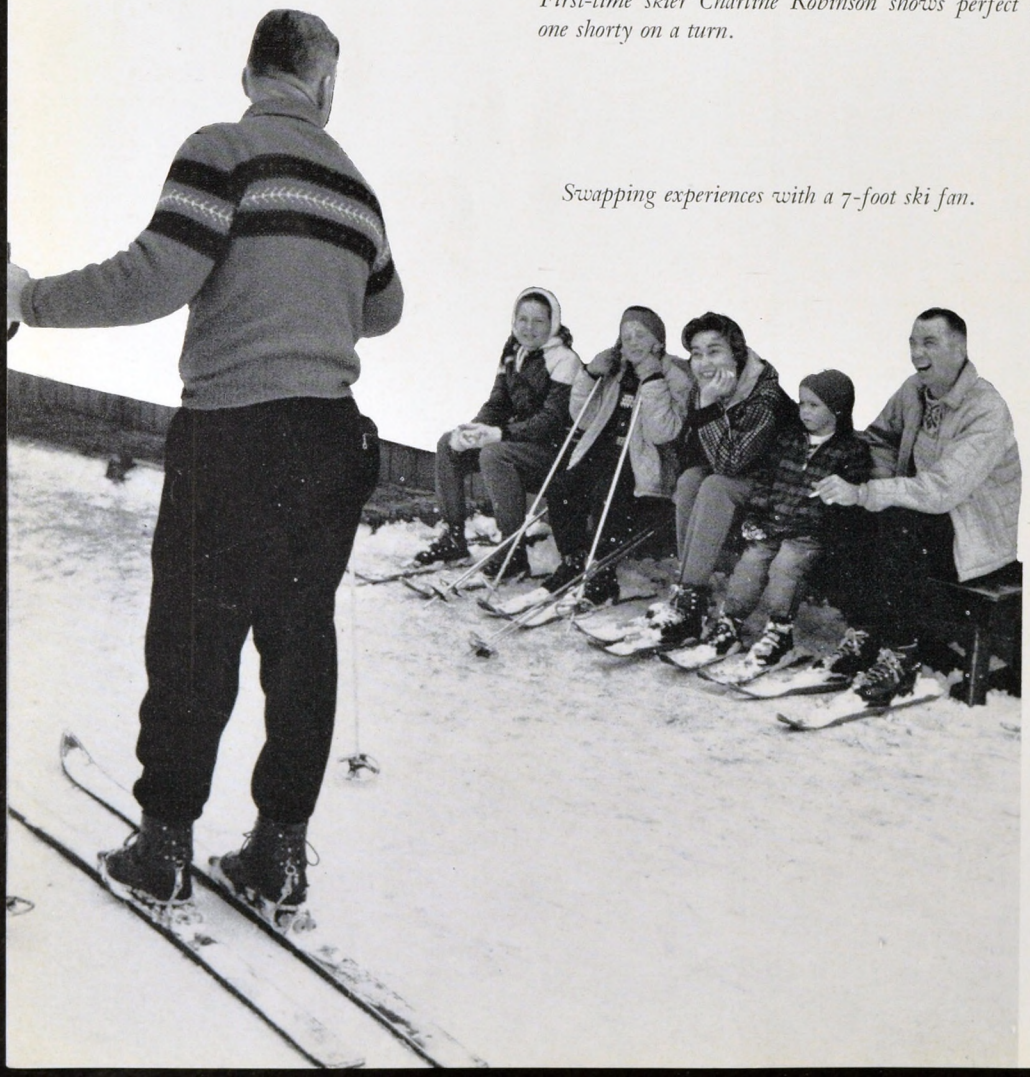
1-2-3 of shorty parallel form:

From top down—1) stand still, knees flexed and feet tight together, practice fast half-twists to make butterfly pattern in snow; 2) for turns, just turn feet, upper body countertwists naturally; 3) finally, glide downhill, feet together, controlling speed by effortless twists. Result: perfect wedeln technique.

Fresh from Texas, the five Robinsons discover snow and Short-ees at Hogback, become ardent supporters of the new ski revolution.

First-time skier Charline Robinson shows perfect control by riding one shorty on a turn.

Swapping experiences with a 7-foot ski fan.



Clif Taylor and Lail show Short versatility on any kind of tow.

ing easy climb uphill are, left to right, William and Charline, and their children—four-year-old son Lail, Melody, eleven, and Noel, nine.

Veteran Skier Lowell Thomas

-with his favorite 2½-footers.

SQUAW WINTER BRINGS THE *"HUNGRY TIME"*

RONALD N. ROOD

Illustrations by ROBERT CANDY

ONE wintry day a friend of mine came on the carcass of a doe which had been killed by a bobcat. We stood with the warden and surveyed the scene. "That's probably the doe that's been reported four or five times last week," the warden said. "She must have been wounded during the hunting season. She might have hung on half the winter before she died. Meanwhile she would have been eating the food that could have gone for some other deer. And food is scarce in winter."

He saw the question in our eyes. "As for the bobcat," he said, "I can't condemn him—not one bit. When he takes the weak and the starving, he does a job that needs doing."

That was several years ago. The thought of winter survival came to me again as Tom and I were snowshoeing in the woods. The rawhide-laced frames on our feet made big marks in the snow.

The path led between two hemlocks. At right angles to our own was the trail of another pair of snowshoes, carefully placed one in front of the other.

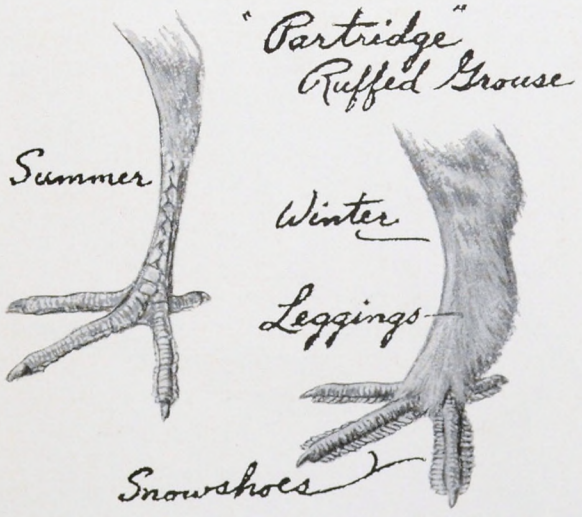
Where Are They Now?

"Ruffed Grouse," suggested Tom, recalling the fringes we'd seen growing along the toes of this Vermont "partridge" last fall in preparation for winter snows.

Other snowshoes had been there, too. All around us were the tracks of the thickly-furred feet of the snowshoe hare, developed for winter along with the whiteness of its coat. But beyond these two tracks, the woods seemed deserted. Not a bird called. The brook could hardly be heard beneath its heavy snow blanket.

"Dad," said Tom, "how about all the other animals? What do they do in the winter? How about all the birds and frogs and insects—where are they now?"

He asked that question four years ago. And we've been finding out the answers ever since. Some of them we discovered during the rest of that trip. What seemed to be only a curled leaf hanging from a twig enclosed a tightly-



woven moth cocoon. A grey "berry" in a bush was the silken chamber of a resting spider. A slab of bark that came off in my hand as I pulled myself over a ledge uncovered a whole insect zoo—drowsy flies, slow-moving beetles, yellow bark borers, even a tightly-folded moth.

Something unusual about an abandoned bird's nest caught my eye. It looked big and bulky, almost as if it had been used two seasons, something birds seldom do. It was roofed over with leaves and grass.

We pulled it closer to examine it. There was an outraged squeak from inside. Then out popped a furry head with two large dark eyes. I released the bush hastily. One of Vermont's most widespread creatures was at home, but not to visitors—the whitefooted deer mouse, ranging in winter from a pile of newspapers in the attic to this remodeled birds nest in the woods.

Other sleeping creatures were around us, too—in the hollows of trees, hidden in ledges, or safe underground. I recall a chipmunk I saw some years ago. It had curled up in its underground burrow for the winter. Now, shortly after Thanksgiving, a bulldozer had unearthed it. It was so profoundly asleep that it could be tossed back and forth like a baseball.

Somewhere in other burrows were skunks and woodchucks. Bears snoozed in their hollow trees. Bats hung like dried fruit from the sides of caves in a dozen parts of the state.

We came upon a porcupine den in a ledge. The snow was all melted around the entrance where it led down between two rocks. The single-file tracks of a fox mingled with those of the quill-pigs as they sauntered forth to a tasty tree. It had nosed the den, but had wisely continued on its way.

Following the fox trail, we found where it had investigated the "form" or cubbyhole of a snowshoe hare under a spruce. Then it sniffed beneath a pine where a red squirrel had sat in the branches, shelling the cones. From there its tracks took us to the edge of the woods where, dog-like, it trotted from one stump to another. We saw where it had pounced on a clump of grass in hopes of finding a mouse nest. Then its tracks turned back into the woods as we continued out into the fields.

Tom tossed a snowball at a haystack. At once a dozen sparrows flew out. They had learned to make good use of this pile of food and warmth. And near by were two ponies, with yesterday's snow still on their backs. Their coats had grown so thick that the body heat had not gone through. They, too, were dressed for winter.

The Indians called this the "hungry time." It was brought by a wicked witch, Squaw Winter. She pinched the stomachs of foxes and wolves, making them chew on bark and sticks to ease the cramp. Sometimes she sent the great white owls down from the Arctic when food was scarce in the north—something she did again in Vermont last year. She made the deer "yard up" in sheltered areas, trampling the snow down in their self-made enclosure and hesitating to leave even if condemning themselves to starvation.

Preparation for the hungry time sometimes takes place far in advance, we discovered. One spring a killing frost blanketed the countryside. The delicate green of the trees turned to an ugly gray. But in scarcely a week, the green was back. The first thing many plants do as they open their buds is to lay the groundwork for a complete new set of buds as an emergency measure. Usually they are not called on for until the following spring, but they are ready—insulating scales and all—even before the current crop of leaves has taken full form.

One fall day we watched a grasshopper prepare in her own way for the winter ahead. She thrust her abdomen deep into the ground. There she remained for several minutes. Later we carefully dug up the spot and found her eggs. They were packed side by side like tiny well-placed grains of rice. Soon the frost would blot out her life and that of millions of her species. Not a single one of her kind would be left in the state of Vermont. Then their entire future on this planet would depend on those silent, unmoving eggs.

So it is each winter with numbers of our insects who fling the torch to an unborn generation—gypsy moths, tent caterpillars, praying mantises, and many species of aphids and beetles.

Squaw Winter cannot touch the snail beneath the rock with the entrance to its shell glazed over, nor the mole and its earthworm prey below the frost line. And winter means little to the young queen hornet who, alone of all her thousands of brothers and sisters, remains to start a new paper nest. Hiding under a bit of bark, she sometimes takes a piece of wood between her jaws, like a child taking a toy to bed.

"Dad, do woodchucks come out in January?"

"Not that I know of, Roger. Why?"

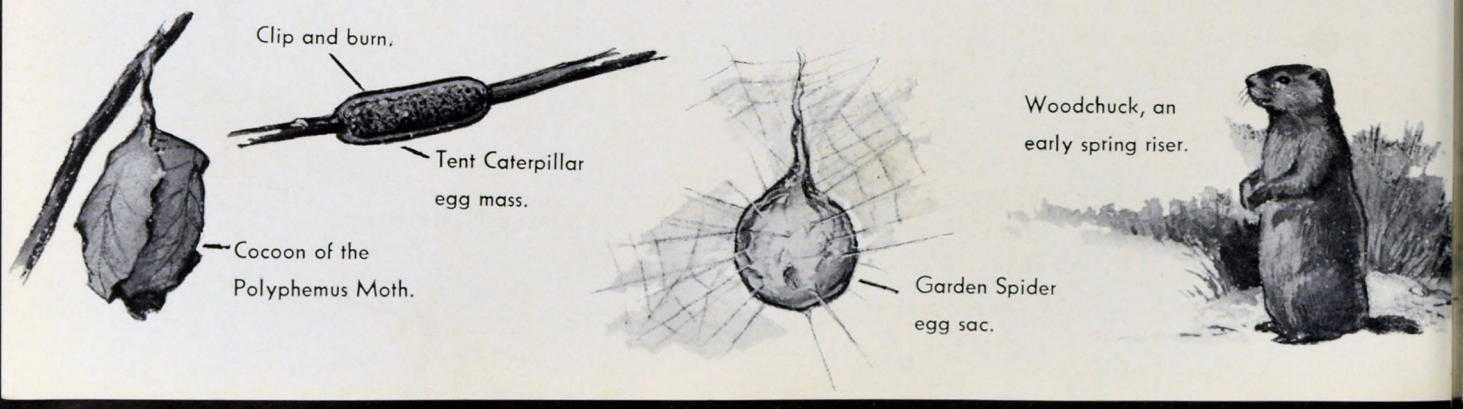
"Well, I think I see one. Right on our hillside."

It was a warm day. The river was swollen with melted snow. I pointed my binoculars in the direction he indicated. Sure enough, poking along over a patch of bare ground, was a woodchuck—Old Groundhog himself. Looking into its habits I discovered some startling things about this process called hibernation.

True hibernation brings about an awesome change in an animal. The heart may beat only three or four times a minute, breathing may be impossible to detect, and the blood courses so slowly that a cut will not bleed. The body processes may slow down to 1/100 their normal speed. Bats, chipmunks and woodchucks may hibernate, but few of the other animals make it—and that includes the "hibernating" black bear, which is only drowsing.

Even hibernating animals are sensitive to touch, strange as it sounds. Perhaps that explains our unusual visitor in the meadow. Some perennially active mole may have blundered into its burrow below the frost line and poked around enough to waken it.

Some of the winter creatures never slow completely to a stop.


Clip and burn.
Tent Caterpillar egg mass.
Cocoon of the Polyphemus Moth.
Garden Spider egg sac.
Woodchuck, an early spring riser.

Any warm day brings out "snow fleas," little dark insects whose smoky-colored bodies absorb the sun's heat. Sometimes a garter snake can be seen sunning itself on a stone wall. Even the Spring Peeper, tiny cousin of the frogs in the mud, and the toads buried underground, may call from the woods during a thaw.

But the worst case of insomnia is that of the wood turtle. It's a confirmed wanderer. In the summer we often see it walking along the edge of a country road—ground-colored shell, yellow and black underneath. One winter day the ice was free of snow on a brook near my house. We put on our skates and bumped along over the rippled ice. Suddenly the children got down on their knees and peered through the ice. There, on the bottom, was a wood turtle, still wandering.

There can be nothing much colder than a cold-blooded reptile plodding through ice-water. Yet there it is, most of the winter, slowly making its way over the bottom. What it's looking for, nobody knows.

Perhaps seven out of ten birds we saw in summer have gone south for the winter. The bobolink of our hayfields is in northern Argentina. The barn swallow may be in Brazil. But many of the birds appear to be on a more limited travel budget, going only to the Carolinas or, at most, Florida. Some do not go even that far. Connecticut bird-lovers, for instance, feed our Vermont juncos all winter.

There's another kind of migration. My home in the mountains is some fifteen miles from the Champlain Valley, as the crow flies. And the crow flies it, too, every fall—a vertical migration of only a few hundred feet in altitude, but nonetheless a migration. We can expect no crows in Lincoln until late February.

Each spring we catch a few trout in our pasture stream. Yet by July the stream is just a dry gravel-bed. But with fall and winter it begins to flow, and the trout enter it from where it joins the river, following the ancestral urge to work upstream. While the brooks are locked under a blanket of snow, natural re-stocking is going on all over Vermont.

There's still another migration, too. We saw its beginnings one day as we were crossing Lake Champlain on a ferry. A straggling of orange-and-black butterflies winged over the lake, scorning the rest offered by the superstructure of the boat. They were the Monarch butterflies, whose life began as caterpillars on our Vermont milkweeds and would continue during the winter along the Atlantic Coast. Weighing but a fraction of an ounce, they yet have the power to fly across large bodies of water—unique insect migrants, making a round trip of hundreds of miles.

Their adaptation to winter is no more strange, perhaps, than that of our valuable insect, the honeybee. It supplies its own warmth. Forming a ball of individuals in the hive, the bees keep warm by increased activity. As the inner ones are heated, they move outwards, and others take their place. But this takes honey, for energy, so the beekeeper leaves enough for them.

Sometimes interloper mice try to make their way into the warmth of the hive. If they are caught in time, they are promptly stung to death. But the bees have not eliminated the problem, for now they have a corpse to dispose of. So they cover it with wax and propolis or bee glue, fashioned from the resin of buds. Then in the spring, the beekeeper opens the hive and finds the intruder, sealed in its airtight mummy-case.

One night there was a knock at my door. "I found something in my wastebasket," said my neighbor from down the road. "What is it, and where'd it come from?"

We carefully tipped the basket out in a dry sink. Smaller than a mouse, running in what seemed to be all directions, was the creature most directly opposite the drowsy winter animals. It was a shrew and, like all shrews, desperately hungry. I tossed in a piece of hamburg; it gobbled it up almost without pausing. Hunger had driven it in from the fields. Hunger drives the weasel from the tough going of the deep snow to the bonanza of the chickenhouse, and causes the mice to girdle the fruit trees at ground level—something they seldom do in summer. Hunger, too, sometimes leads the fox along the highway in broad daylight in search of some crumb from a passing car.

Four winters ago the water in our cistern became cloudy. Uncovering the spring which supplied it, we found the evidence of a frantic chase. A mink, ranging far from its usual haunts in the river several hundred feet away, had captured the trout we kept in the spring to keep it clean. With the ice frozen solid over the river the mink sometimes has to look elsewhere for food.

There's one animal that may get fat in winter. That's the beaver, our familiar aquatic engineer. Its fur is so thick and resistant that it can swim through ice-water with no apparent discomfort. All the autumn it has labored, cutting poplars and willows for food, stuffing their green branches butt-first in the mud. Then, when the pond is frozen solid, he merely swims out under the ice to its food cache and helps himself. Deep within the lodge that seems to be but a mound of snow at the edge of the water, he feasts until spring.

We have found out much about our winter creatures. But the prediction as to what kind of a winter we'll be having this year is still anybody's guess. The thickness of the scales on winter buds is supposed to tell, as is the layer of fat on the saddle of a bear, the thickness of the hair on a cow. But the most reliable indicator of all, according to the old-timers, is the famous woolly-bear caterpillar.

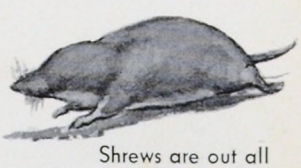
Wearing a bristly crew-cut, brown in the center and black at both ends, the woolly-bear is eagerly watched for a forecast of the winter to come. The wider the center band, say some weather prophets, the more open and snowless the winter will be. Others disagree; the bigger the band the bigger the snowdrifts.

How does the woolly-bear feel about its own predictions? Unaffected by the controversy, it finds a pile of leaves in a hollow tree. Then quietly retiring from sight, it curls up until spring.

END

Black Bears sometimes hibernate in the open against a ledge or brush pile.

Sparrow Hawk or Kestrel, a good little hawk, returns early.



Shrews are out all winter. Small front feet, unlike the Mole.

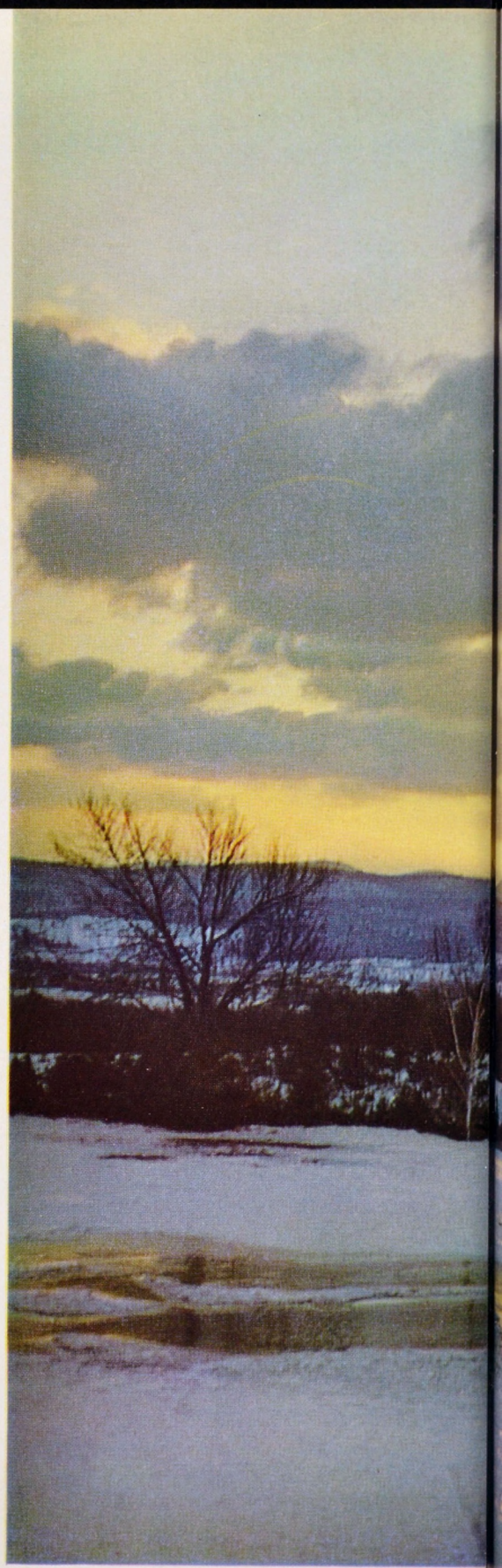
Winter's Many Faces

All the sheeted hills round about were dumb as death. . . . Elsewhere there was nothing but snow under the moon—snow drifted to the level of stone fences or curling over their tops in a tip of frosted silver; snow banked high on either side of the road or lying heavy on the pines and hemlocks in the woods, where the air seemed by comparison as warm as a conservatory. It was beautiful beyond expression. Nature's boldest sketch in black and white, done with a Japanese disregard of perspective and daringly altered from time to time by the restless pencils of the moon.

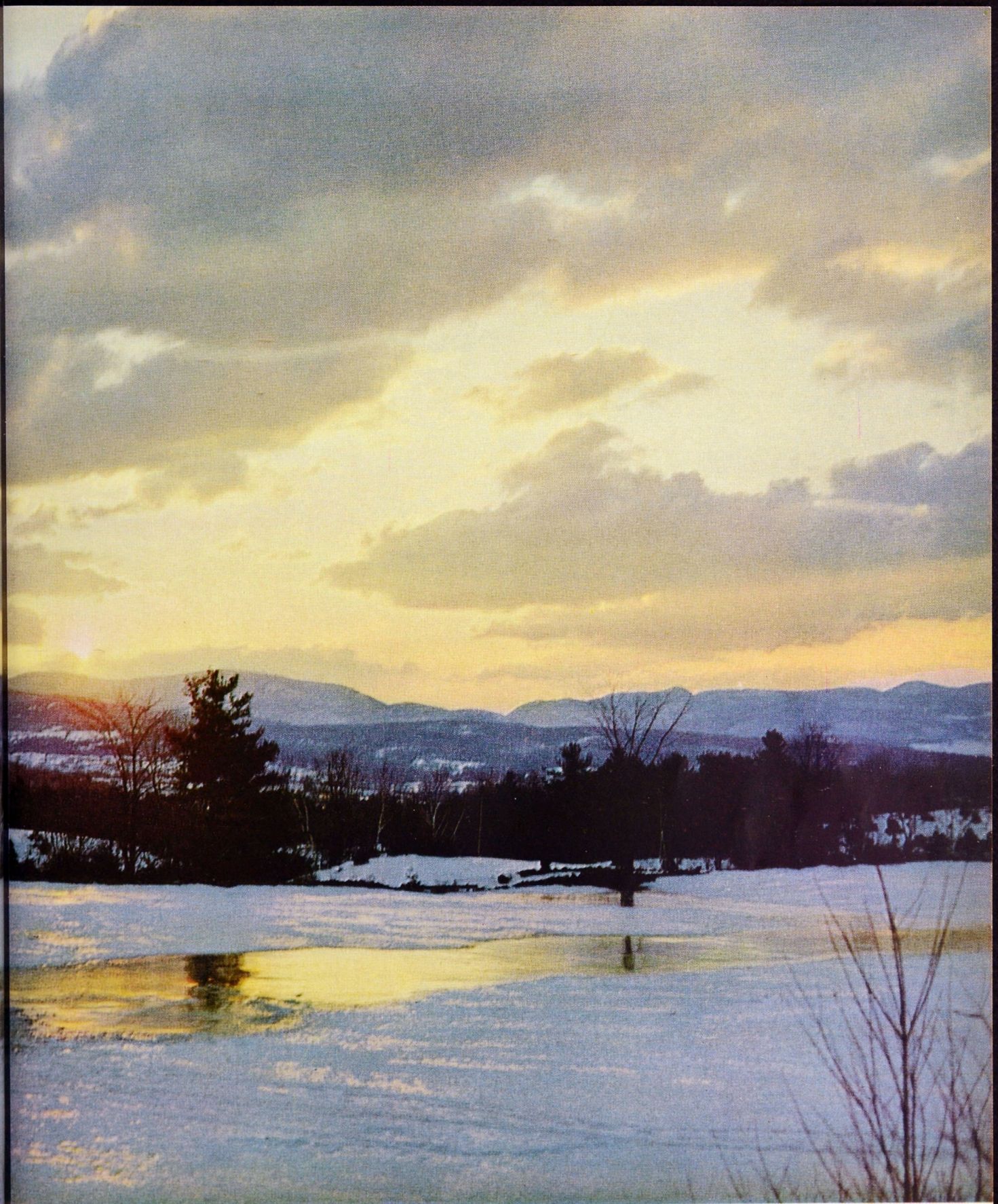
In the morning the other side of the picture was revealed by the colors of the sunlight. There was never a cloud in the sky that rested on the snow line of the horizon as a sapphire on white velvet. Hills of pure white or speckled and furred with woods rose above the solid white levels of the fields, and the sun rioted over their embroideries till the eyes ached. . . .

Next day all idleness and trifling were drowned in a snow-storm that filled the hollows of the hills with whirling blue mist, bowed the branches in the woods till you ducked, but were powdered all the same when you drove through, and wiped out the sleighing tracks. Mother Nature is beautifully tidy if you leave her alone. She rounded off every angle, broke down every scarp, and tucked the white bedclothes till not a wrinkle remained, up to the chins of the spruces and hemlocks that would not go to sleep.

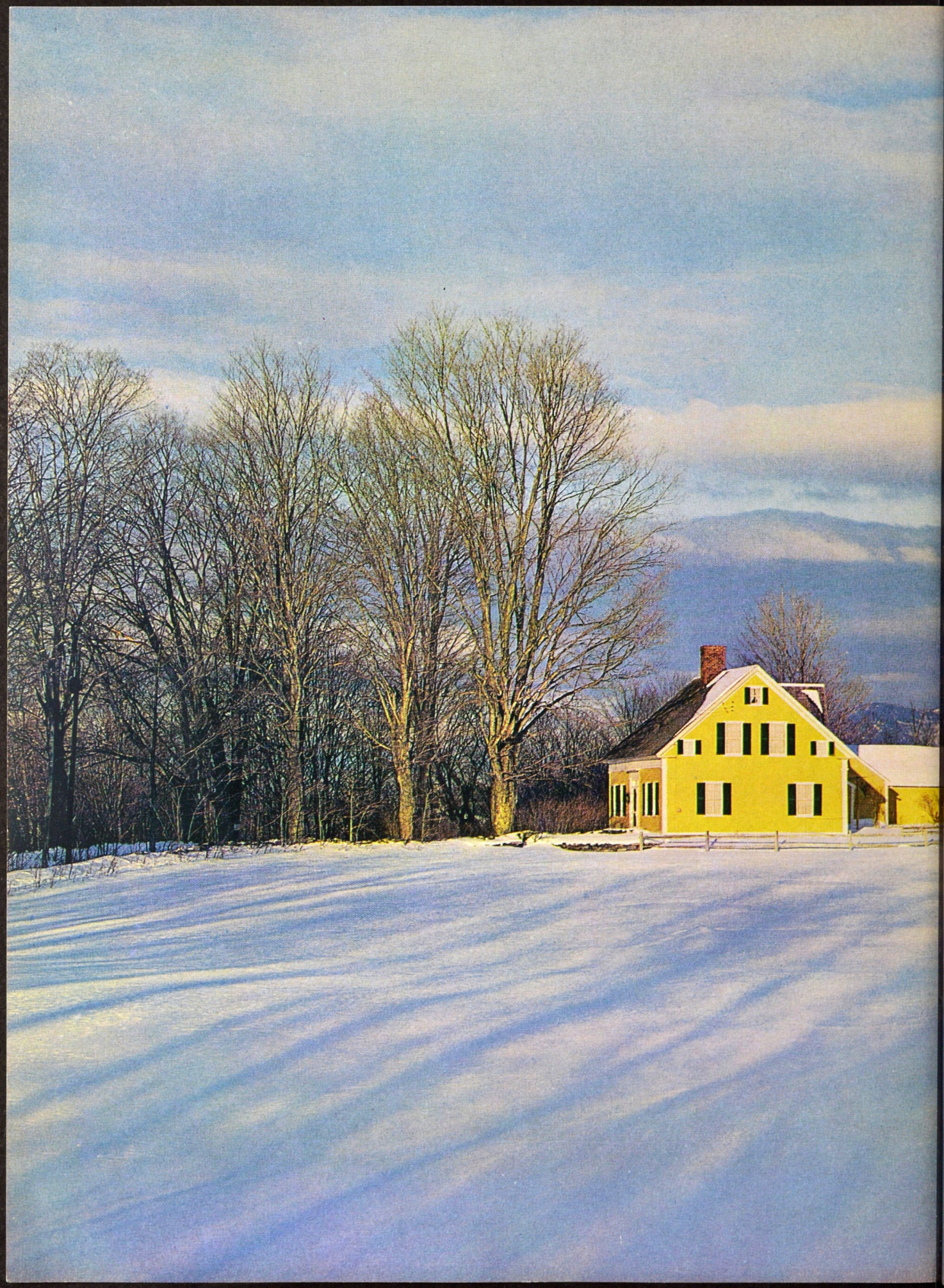
"In Sight of Monadnock" from *Letters of Travel*—Rudyard Kipling

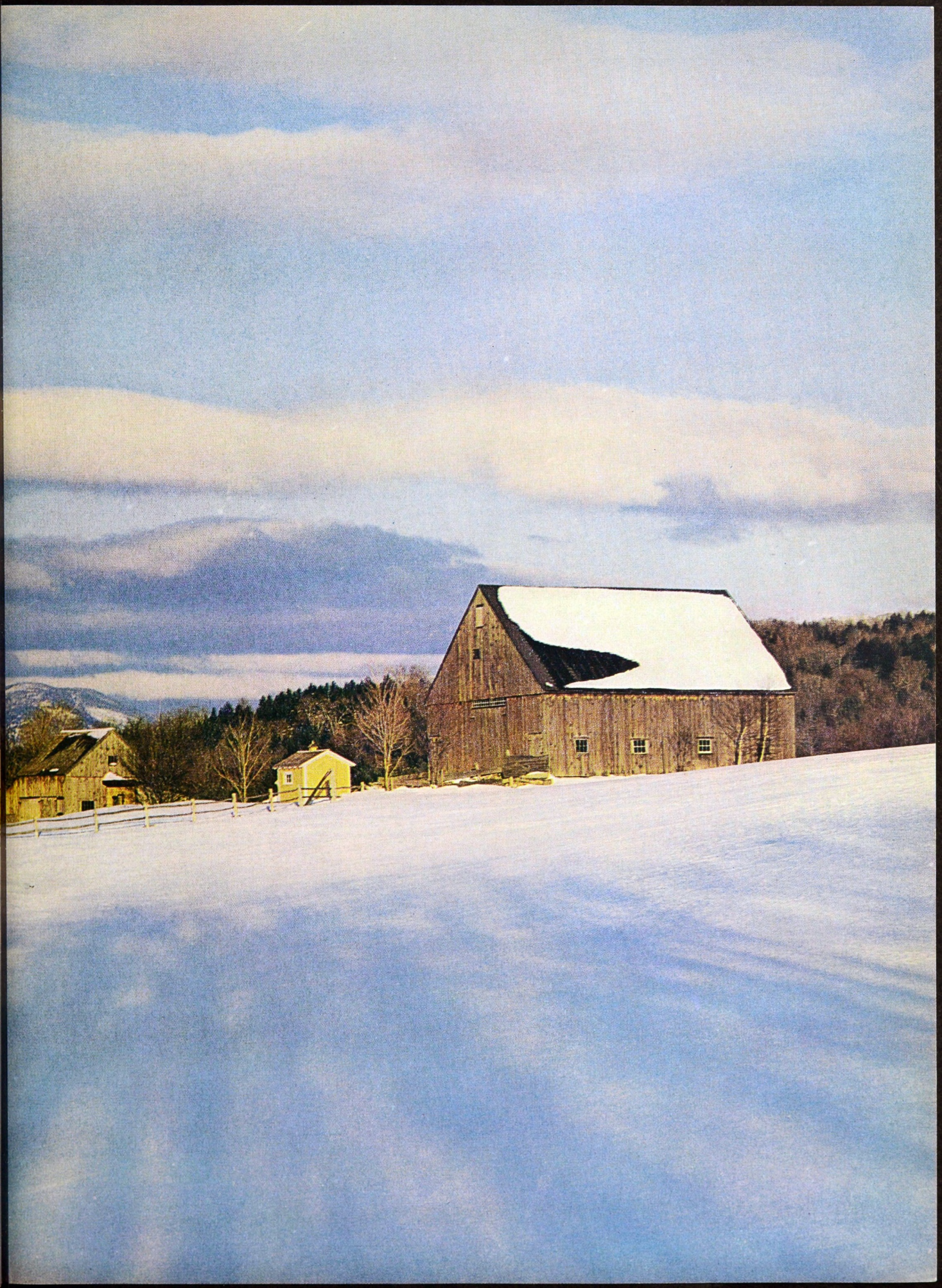


Sunset reflections near Waitsfield—Ozzie Sweet



(OVERLEAF) *Evening shadows in Cavendish*—ROBERT HOLLAND



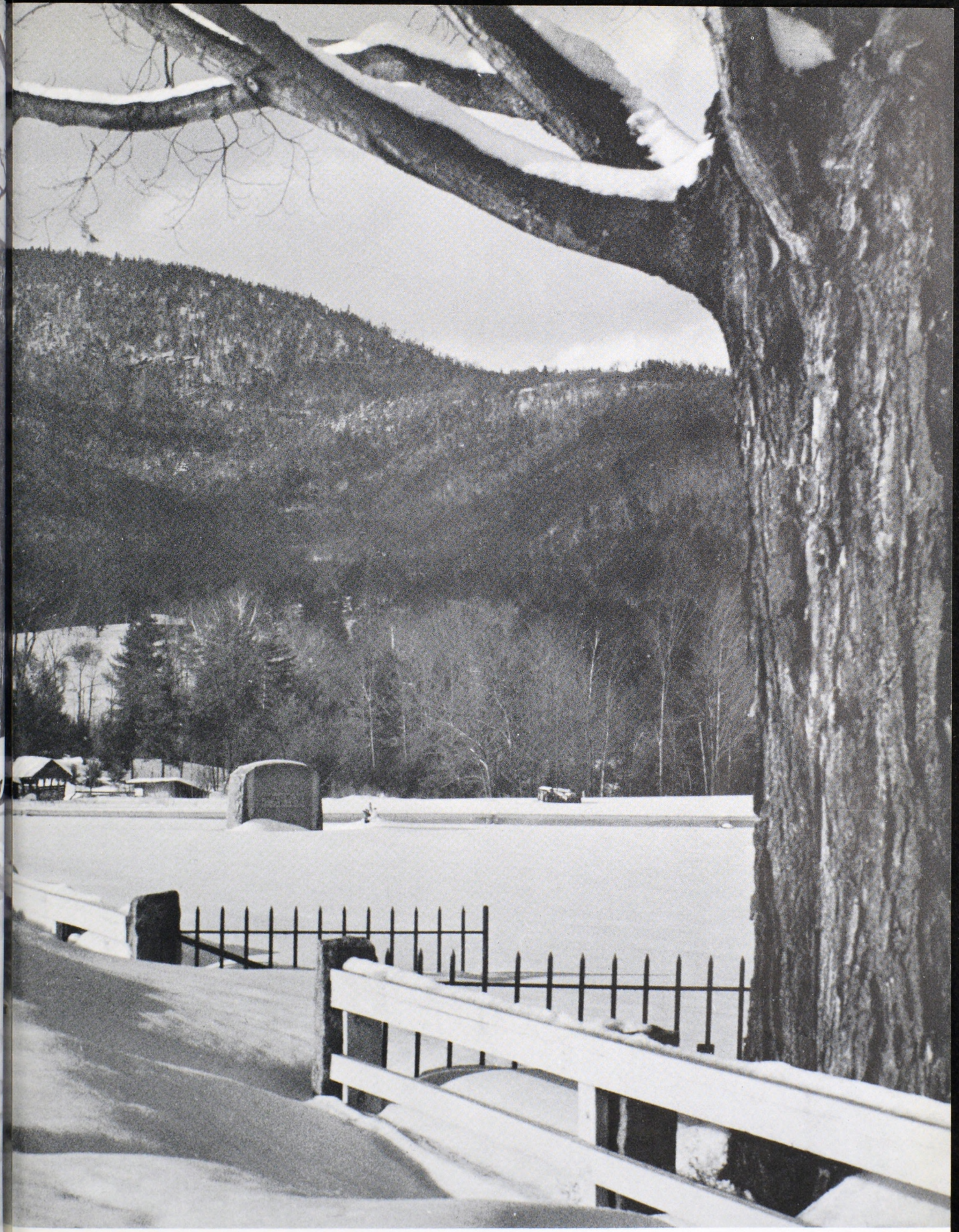


Roy Kennedy painting near Underhill—DAVID WITHAM

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
LIBRARY

NOV 1 0 1961

Pulpcutters—near Newark—GRANT HEILMAN

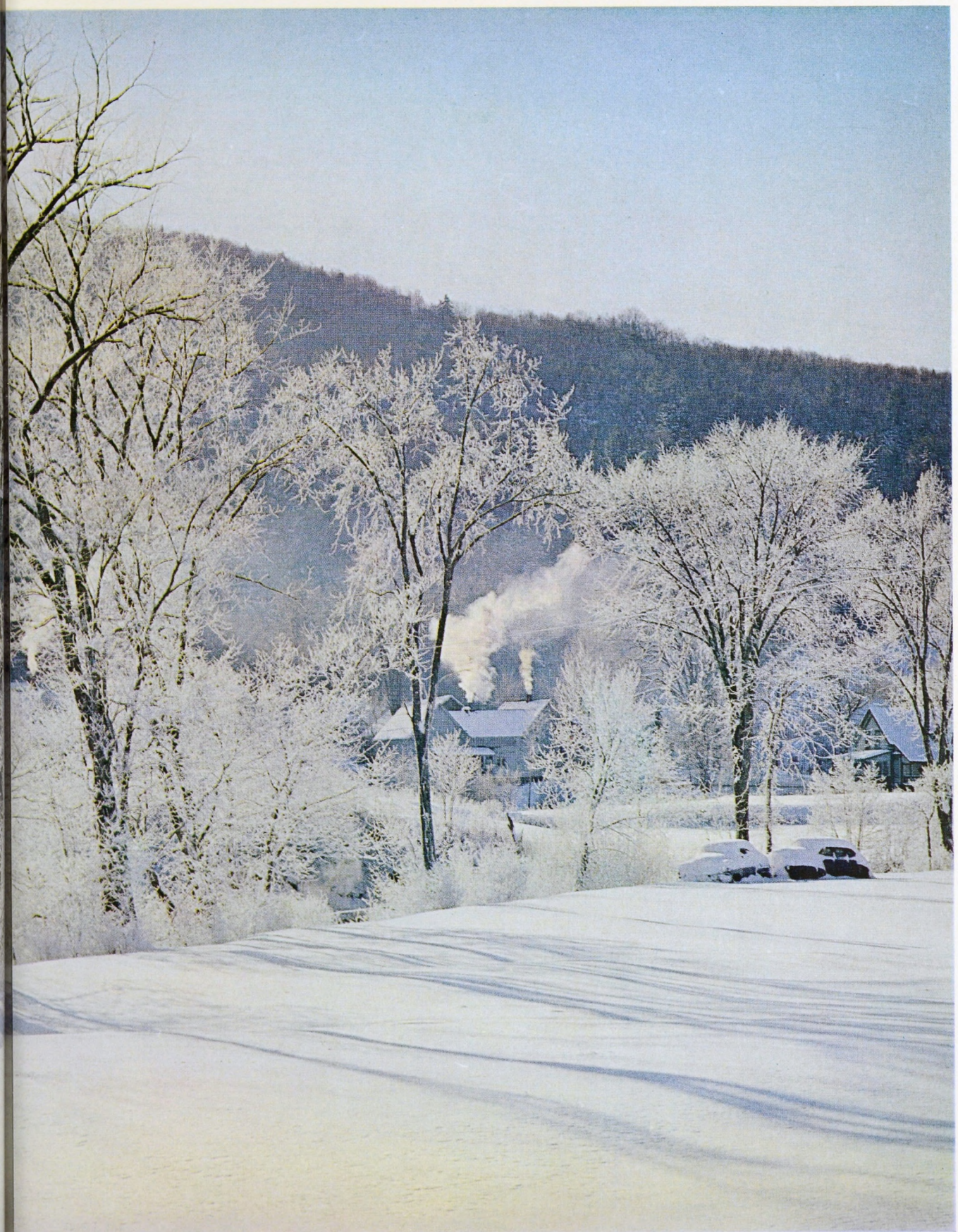


Ascutney & Mt. Ascutney—NEWELL GREEN

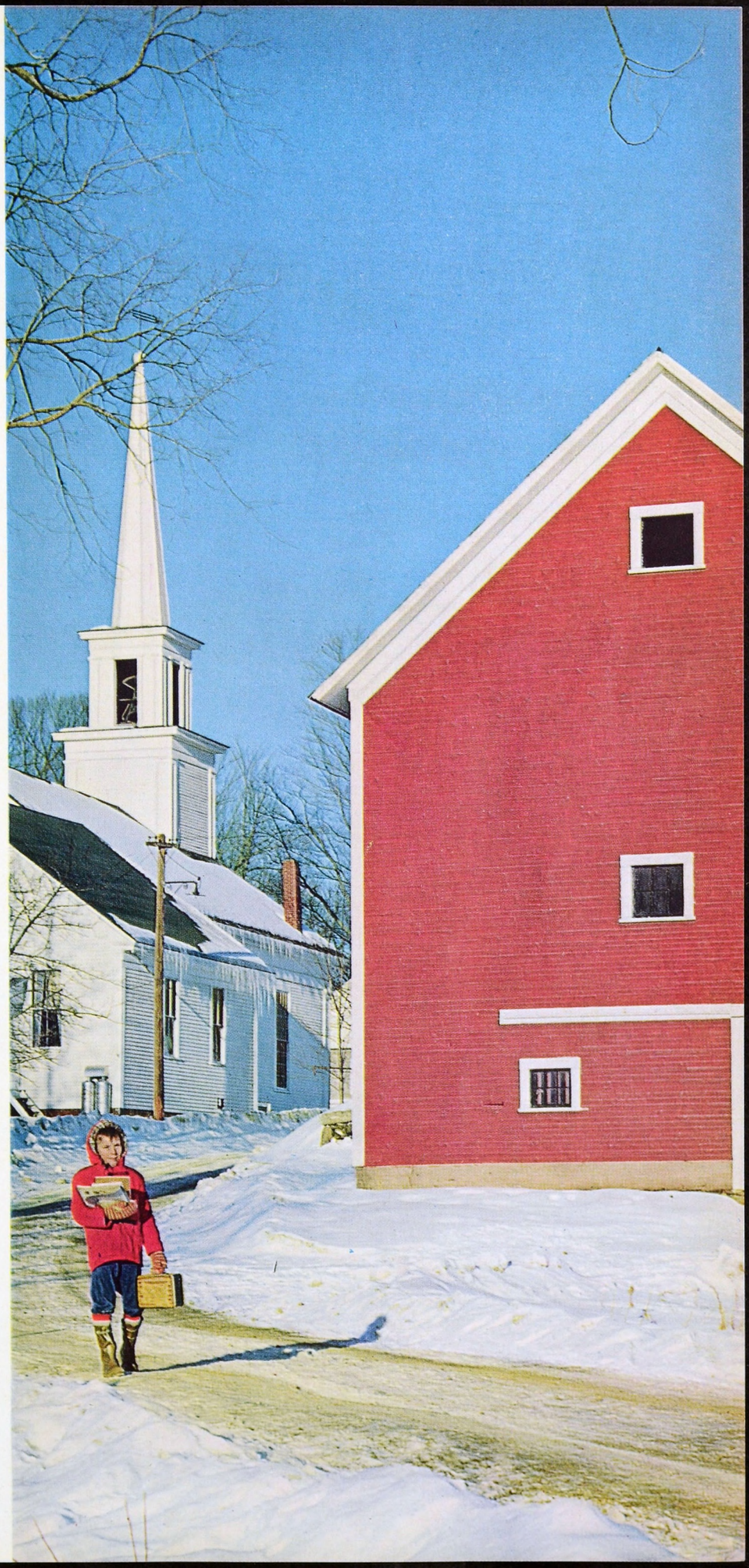
Dummerston brook—JOHN H. VONDELL

(OPPOSITE) *Pomfret farm*—DAVID WITHAM

Morning frost at Marshfield—BRUCE O. NETT



East Ferrisburg—E. L. GOCKELER



McIndoe Falls—GRANT HEILMAN

What **everyone** thought would happen

What actually **did** happen

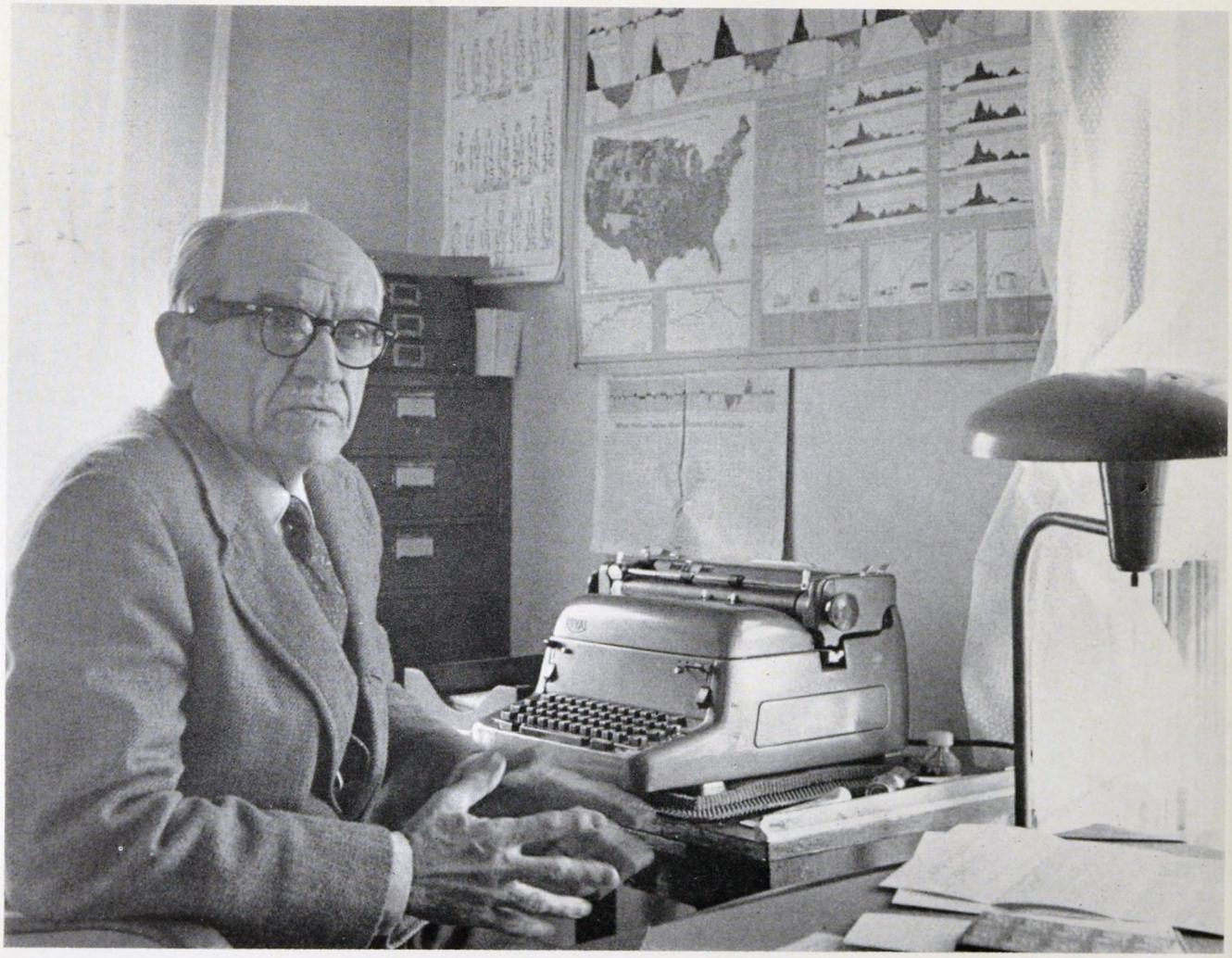
THE ART OF *Contrary Thinking*

ROBERT SNOWMAN

Photographs by NEIL PRIESSMAN, JR.

Contrary (1. ken'trē-ri; 2. cŏn'trā-ry) adj. **1.** Opposed in situation, direction, aim, purpose, or operation; antagonistic. **2.** Adverse. **3.** Opposite; opposing. **4.** Characterized or swayed by contrariness; inclined to opposition or contradiction; captious, perverse.

If Humphrey B. Neill, the Vermont Ruminator of Saxtons River, were asked to describe himself with one word, this is doubtless the one he would choose. Since no one else who knows the sprightly man would, he thus



stands alone—contrarily—against the others.

This is a prospect that Mr. Neill faces with cheerful serenity, for he is an independent thinker of the type that Vermont is supposed to be filled with. An analyst of economic trends, Mr. Neill has made contrariness his life's work, with results beneficial to him and followers of Wall Street and its Stock Exchange.

Mr. Neill writes and issues the Neill Letters of Contrary Opinion, brisk 4-page bi-monthly analyses of trends, situations and states-of-mind current in Wall Street—indeed, in the national social, political and business arenas. He has expanded *The Art of Contrary Thinking*, a book of his originally published in 1950. It has gone into its third printing. A 1931 book, *Tape Reading and Market Tactics*, was rushed back into print in 1959 after a brief mention of it and its author in *Time* magazine. Two of Mr. Neill's other books in this field, (now out of print), are *The Inside Story of the Stock Exchange* (1950) and *Understanding American Business* (1939), a textbook.

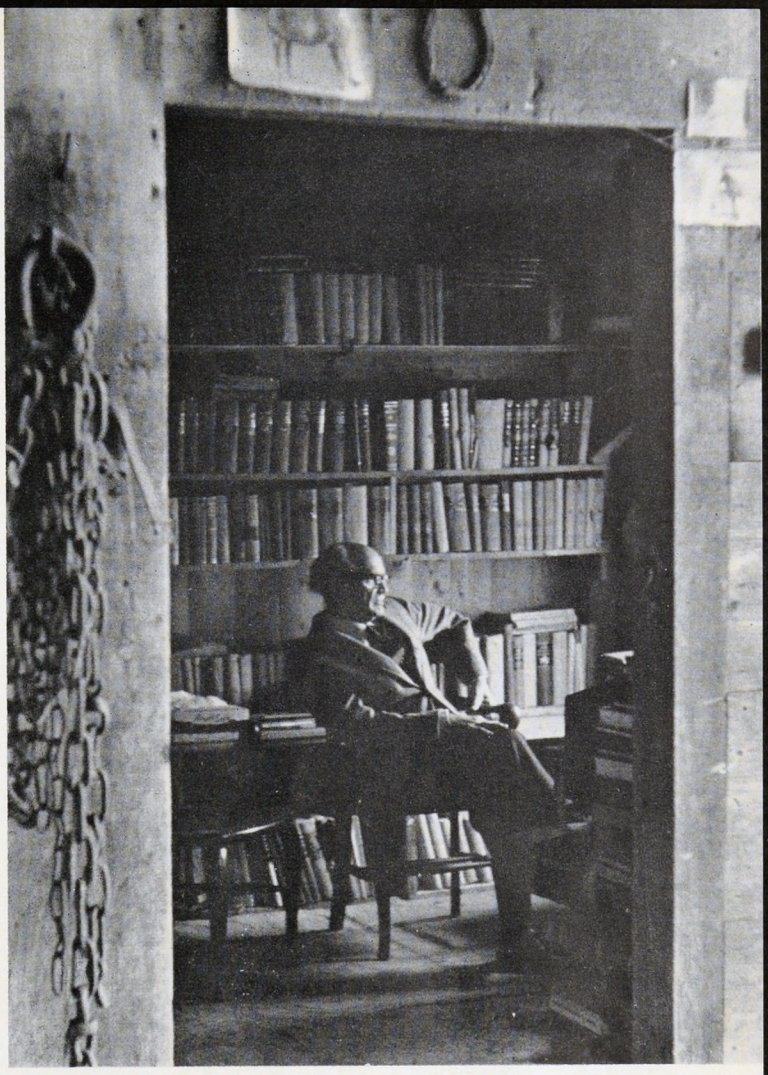
If you now picture Mr. Neill as a dusty, dull old bird perched on his gnarled limb of wisdom in his Saxtons River aerie, blame the writer. An engaging man with thinning gray hair and a gray moustache, he is spry as a cricket and possesses as much natural energy as a piston rod. His mind seems never to be at rest, his interests ranging from antiques and antiquities to shuffleboard. (He maintains his own court.) Quick-witted and courtly he is, and you know it by looking at him, but taciturn he is not.

Mr. Neill delights in spurring people, in stimulating them to think for themselves; and this is the kernel of his theory of contrary thinking. Epigrams of his that continually season his writing are these: Thrust your thoughts out of a rut. Be a non-conformist when using your mind. When everyone thinks alike, everyone is likely to be wrong.

America's No. 1 "contrarian" himself defines contrary thinking in its simplest terms as the art of ". . . training your mind to ruminate in directions opposite to general public opinion; but weigh your conclusions in the light of current events and current manifestations of human behavior."

Now, then; there is nothing really new or startling in this thesis, but it is one often disregarded in our age of conformity. For example, everyone from noted economic analysts to the man in the street believed there would be an immediate and serious business slump in the 1945–46 postwar period; how wrong they were! And still they had had the post-World War I "silk shirt era" to serve them as a guide.

How valuable would have been an influential contrarian in the early 30's, when Hitler and his Storm Troopers were being pooh-poohed by the entire world!



Mr. Neill in his letters does not advise or suggest; rather he urges his readers to consider (or ruminate) with all the brio of a mule-skinner urging a reluctant pack train. "Think for yourself," is his unending call, and he is constantly sounding it.

"Thinking opposite" does not require a cynic's sourness, declares the Sage of Saxtons River, for it entails a thorough consideration of all the factors in a situation, with emphasis on those not likely to be thought of as such.

To be brief, contrary thinking (which should be a tool and not an end in itself, says Mr. Neill) is characterized by remembering that "It is foolish to do just what other people are doing, because there are almost sure to be too many people doing the same thing." So said William Stanley Jevons, British economist, some hundred years ago.

There you have it. Says Humphrey Neill, from his Saxtons River editorial workshop, "It sounds so good I think I'll try it myself!"

And so he does, and thousands of people reap the benefits. END

STONEWARE was first made in Vermont by Captain John Norton, who established a pottery in Bennington in 1793 to produce such necessary, everyday items as crocks, churns, jars, pitchers, and bottles. The present-day Bennington Potters had somewhat similar beginnings, if quite a different outcome.

It was started shortly after World War II by David Gil, a young potter with a passion for doing good work, who had moved to Vermont with his wife Gloria, simply because they found here a congenial climate for craftsmanship. At first Gil operated a one-man shop in his home, producing, as did Captain Norton, a variety of everyday items in stoneware. Most of these were sold locally.

From the first, the assumption of the Potters has been that there is a ready market for pottery of handcraft quality if it is both attractive and practical, that is, if it gives pleasure when seen and when used. This assumption, modest and reasonable though it may seem, is in fact an almost unfailing prescription for failure. The mortality rate among craft potteries is so high that fewer than a half dozen survive in the entire country. Bennington Potters, however, managed at first to survive on its thin diet of sales to tourists and the local market, and then to prosper as its markets expanded.

The pottery grew in a series of advances and setbacks, outgrowing first the one-man stage of operation and then its plant. It now employs thirty people, occupies two buildings with 10,000 feet of floor space, and produces more than a quarter-million pieces annually. Material arrives by the carload and sales in California alone far exceed the entire annual production of the original plant.

It seems safe to say that no other product has spread the name of Bennington and the idea of Vermont craftsmanship over so wide an area. The United States has exhibited Bennington pottery at international trade fairs in Syria, Yugoslavia, and Tunisia. It was exhibited at the First International Ceramic Festival at Cannes. In this country, it has been displayed by nearly a score of museums from coast to coast. It has won a number of prizes, including Good Design awards from New York's Museum of Modern Art and Chicago's Merchandise Mart. JOHN RYAN

David Gil puts handcrafts on the assembly line to take over where the famous stoneware left off a century ago

THE Bennington Potters

Photographs by CLEMENS KALISCHER
Color photograph by MATTHIAS TARNAY

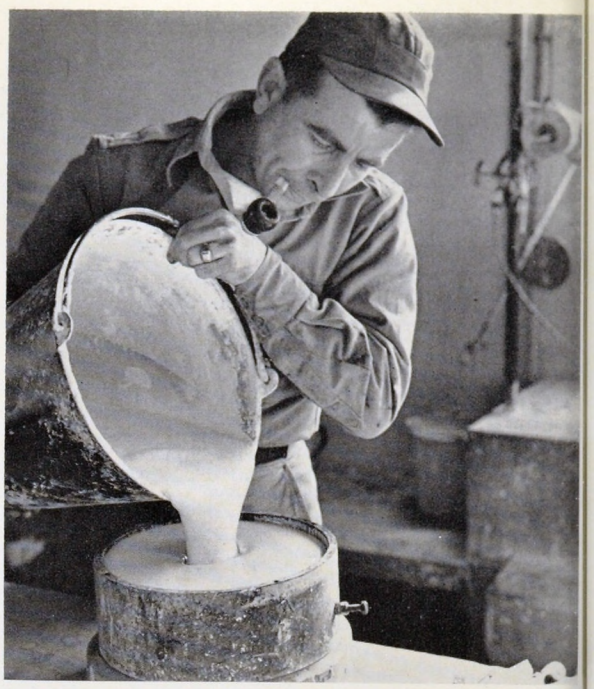
THE Bennington Potters do *not* make "Bennington" pottery, a fact which causes confusion to countless tourists who arrive each year at the neat white showroom on Bennington's County Street. They ask, somewhat puzzled at what they see, "Is this THE Bennington Pottery?" The fact also causes concern to some historians and collectors, who resent the use by a growing 20th-century firm of the label associated with a once-famous pottery now dead some 103 years.

In point of fact the tourists are right. It is THE Bennington Pottery, the only pottery in all of Vermont to carry that precise name, now or ever before. The confusion arises from the fact that a century ago Bennington was the

(*Text continued on page 46*)

This is how it's done:

MODELLING

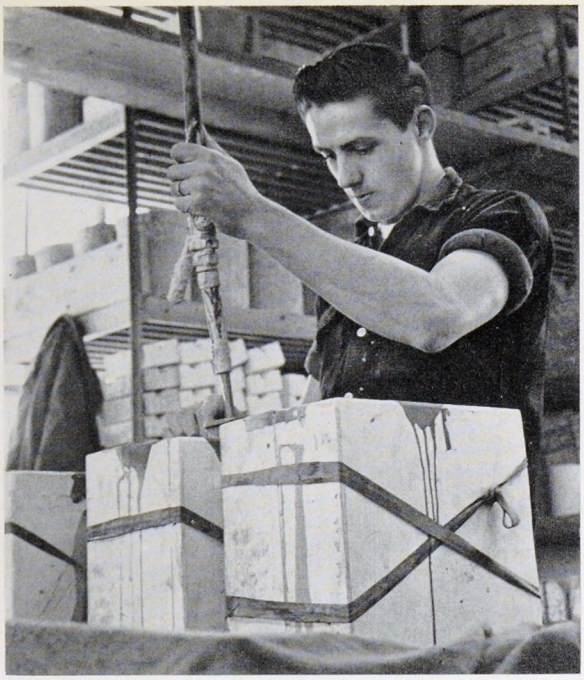


MOLDING

The making of a piece of pottery, from the first design to the final firing, involves many skills and specialities. The major stages are shown here, starting clockwise from the upper left. The steps begin with the MODEL, as Gil shapes it directly in plaster. Then, this model must be converted into a PRODUCTION MOLD. Copies from this mold are made in the two ways shown above—for simpler shapes, by CASTING liquid clay into open-top molds; for

FIRING

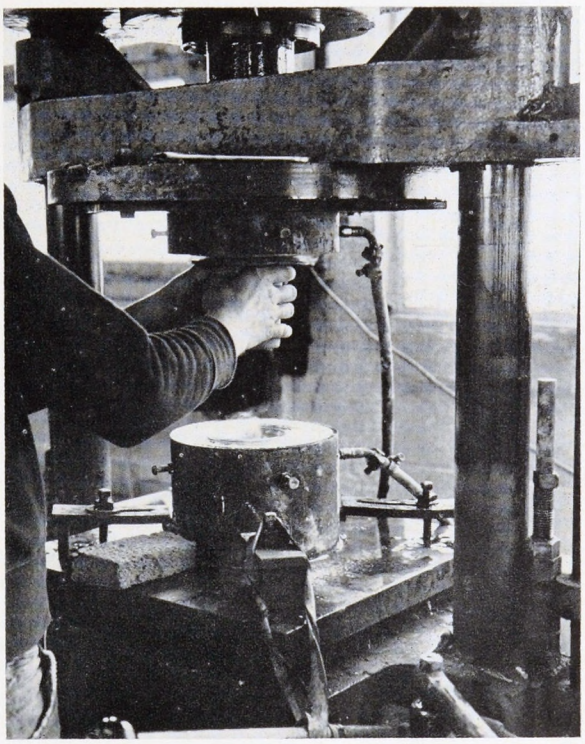
SPRAY GLAZING



CASTING

more intricate shapes, by PRESSING doughy lumps of clay between two interlocking molds in a hydraulic press. When the rough copies have emerged, from casting or pressing, they are individually TRIMMED in the tidying process called "fettling." Then, easily-handled pieces are DIP GLAZED, while the more intricate or hard-to-handle forms are SPRAY GLAZED. The last step is FIRING in the kiln, at temperatures that can be as high as 2350 degrees.

DIP GLAZING



PRESSING

TRIMMING

Creating for tomorrow . . .

To keep craftsmanship actively alive, as business demands more time, the Gils have begun an "artist in residence" plan. A trained ceramist is invited to use the facilities of their shop for a year while working freely on his or her own work. This year Jean Parsons, a graduate of Cranbrook Academy and a former Fulbright student, works in a corner of the plant with her own wheel, small kiln, and a laboratory array of materials for glazing, which is her special interest. The Gils hope to arrange a museum showing of her work, which can properly be called "art ware." She also assists with the kind of custom orders the Gils obligingly handle for local customers (a teaset for Mother's Day or a set of mugs in a special color) as well as with the large-scale contract designs done for restaurants and other businesses. Next year, in addition to a new resident artist, they will launch an apprenticeship program with Alfred University's School of Ceramics, giving a selected graduate student a year of practical experience as well as 8 credits toward his M.A.

Glazing for a side-table top poses a new set of problems.

home of several pottery operations, producing under different labels the work of several noted artists. Their collective artistry now is conveniently, if inaccurately, dubbed "Bennington." It constitutes most of the sought-after "Bennington" pottery now found in local and national museums.

There are other ironic contrasts between today's pottery and the most famous of its predecessors. Fenton's business failed after only 11 years, in spite of artistic success. The Gils have just survived their 13th year with the best business record yet. Fenton's aim was to get away from common crockery and produce a higher form of ornamental ware; the Gils believe that household ware should be both practical and ornamental. (Norton's ware, often unself-consciously attractive, would never have been considered worthy of a museum in those days.)

The Gils admit—rather sheepishly now—that when they arrived, trained as ceramists rather than collectors, they knew nothing of Bennington's historic pride in pottery. If indeed they had known, they might have found a name to make clear the differences between their design ideas and those of the 19th century modellers, whose goal was to transplant on artless American soil the English art of decorative glazes and porcelain so fine it could imitate marble statuary. Of those old designs John Spargo has said in his detailed history of pre-Gil Bennington potters, "It is worth remembering that the so-called Rockingham of Bennington is neither more nor less than an American copy of English Tortoiseshell ware." And again, "At its best, Parian ware produced at Bennington was decidedly inferior to the best English Parian." This is not to deprecate the quality of what was made at Bennington, nor that century's tradition of imitation: The English were trying *their* best to reproduce what the Chinese had done superbly for 10 centuries.

The Gils, at any rate, had no traditional notions about design when they arrived from Alfred University in 1948 to set up a small barn pottery to make stoneware. If they labored under any ideals of the destiny of the pure "artist," they were soon relieved of them in the course of grappling with the impure world of business. What did not change during this incubation period was their fundamental belief that mugs and pitchers and plates could be kinds of art objects in the practical realm, the best example of whatever each is meant for—and that quality is not attached to price tag alone. This last is the hardest goal, for low price implies making something in enough quantity to provide wide sales. Because of the nature of potter's clay, maintaining quality design in quantity production was the toughest challenge they chose for themselves. That they never flagged in the effort to meet it, goes a long way toward explaining why, in fact, they have survived.

Clay, as every school child knows, is a moist "plastic" or moldable material that can be pressed or pounded or

built up into virtually any form. It seldom has a uniform surface or thickness when hand formed, nor a symmetrical shape. The most ancient device for shaping symmetrical pots was the revolving potter's wheel. The force of spinning distributes the material equally as the potter molds his clay inside and out. Each "thrown" piece is an individual creation, for even when copying a model the potter has an artist's leeway for his immediate feelings about form and surface. Likewise, applying the outer glaze coat has always given the potter great freedom for personal and spontaneous design.

When the potter first decided to increase his output, he turned to molding a series of copies from an original model —either by *casting* liquid clay into open plaster molds, or by *pressing* doughy lumps of clay between two interlocking molds. In both cases, enough water is absorbed by the porous plaster to leave a piece firm enough for firing.

Both casting and pressing have been used for hundreds of years: the famous Bennington museum pieces were either either slip cast or pressed (by hand) into intricate molds. Both methods remain staples at the Bennington Pottery today: casting may be done in a 1000 molds at a time, while pressing is done continuously by one operator at a hydraulic press producing up to 200 pieces per hour. It is not that the Gils have a sentimental attachment to the artistry of these methods or to the large amount of hand-finishing that still goes along with them. They would like their plant to be as automatic as possible. In a sense they are already a "factory" turning out 6000 pieces a week, yet their operation is a far cry from General Motors. The difference is not one of desire but of means. Almost any ceramic object can be formed, trimmed and glazed automatically today—*if* the business can support an immense outlay for machines. Since they as yet cannot, the Gils must inch along toward greater mechanization and its benefits in both price and quality. At the same time, they are quite clear that even big scale production need not rob their pottery of its individual character. Therein is the key to the style of today's Bennington pottery that both puzzles and intrigues the expectant tourist.

Against the town's historic backdrop and the expectation of traditional design, the Gil's pottery is certainly modern. Yet it is not consciously "styled" to imitate either pristine modern or extremely bizarre forms. David Gil, as chief designer, strives for comfortable and usable designs. His sense of form is personal but neither private nor assertive; it is casual and often a whimsical comment on what one can do with clay. The most contemporary thing about the style is the simple decorativeness inherent in shape and texture, with nothing extraneous tacked on. The least contemporary thing about it, seemingly, is the absence of the high-fashion look of refinement and precision. There is a reason for this.

What has happened in most production potteries, Gil points out, is that a mass-production mentality has killed the spontaneous quality that remains natural to stoneware. Since the ware is no longer individually thrown, it is assumed that what comes out of molds should look machine-made. The slick, uniform "machine esthetic" of our time is of course suitable to objects stamped out of slick uni-

Occasional ideas may require a rough sketch before the design comes alive in the plaster model.

A group of giant casseroles, one of Gil's new departures in cookingware, lure closer inspection by an agile customer.

form materials like steel and aluminum; it may even be appropriate to more precise porcelains. But stoneware is not slick or precise, is seldom uniform or stable, and after centuries of trial and error designing for it is an inexact science at best.

Consequently Gil seldom designs with a sharpened pencil on a clean drafting pad. He recognizes that if design is to remain fresh as technology moves forward, the designer must remain a craftsman in his field. He works rather like a master baker in a vast kitchen of ingredients, constantly mixing, moistening, trying new recipes and revising old ones in order to get a stronger body, a brighter glaze, a more stable material. Of all the unknowns he must contend with, the most persistent is the effect of heat. Potter's clay is a mixture of earthy materials and water, and these change in different ways as water is driven out by heat. (Glass results from materials which completely melt and fuse; pottery, either earthenware or stoneware, mainly contains clays which harden without fusing. Stoneware is stronger because of a higher proportion of glassy materials that do fuse. Porcelain is an equal mixture of each and, being harder, can be more precisely and delicately formed.)

A mug or pitcher usually shrinks as much as 20% in fir-

—while behind her stand other unusual pottery pieces.

ing, and there is no guarantee that it will shrink uniformly. So, Gil maintains, why not make a certain roughness and irregularity part of its character? Press molds need not be smooth and highly refined, but can add texture and roughness to a molded piece. A glaze may puddle or blister in firing; why not accept and even encourage such random and spontaneous effects that are just as true to production pottery as to hand-made ware? The rough, personal quality need not stem from sentimental imitation of handcraft, but may come from intelligent, contemporary expression in the material.

Each time a new design is added to the line, which is more or less continuously, there may be months of testing and altering before it comes through the production cycle to his satisfaction. Because there are so many factors working against a standard result, any design in clay must be geared to available technical knowledge. Many producers will only venture the shapes and formulas proven to give the least trouble, but Gil seizes on each new idea to push his technical know-how a little farther.

Experimentation is, in fact, his way of becoming an ever more skillful craftsman, so that, in turn, he may be increasingly free in what he designs. Is it possible to press a stoneware disc big enough for a coffee table? Is it possible to make a handleless mug on the principle of thermos construction? Everything has to be tried out, and he will tackle any problem that takes a minimum investment, trying new uses for his material as he garners data about it. If a bridge could be constructed in stoneware, no doubt he would find a way to do it. Many ideas come while fooling around. Trying out an open molded fireplace at home, he wondered how to make it flame-resistant. He hit on the possibility of a bin made of silicon carbide, a high-temperature material, and he now wonders if it might not be equally good for an stovetop casserole.

The showroom is Gloria Gil's special domain. As an active partner in the business, she presides over it with an unhurried and welcoming charm that has built it into a "place to see." Many visitors ask to see more than meets the eye, and in the summer they are invited to visit the plant out back, where a special demonstration gives a complete picture of the pottery-making process. More than a place of commerce, the Gils want the showroom to be a pleasant and informative experience, a place of direct contact with customers and their reactions to all that has been designed.

Sales from the showroom account for a steady 15% of the pottery's volume, a volume that has grown 600% in the last 5 years. But volume, the Gils know, is no guarantee of success: Fenton had more orders than he could fill when he shut down in 1853, unable to meet the overhead of carting wares to scattered stores and of collecting cash from them. Today pottery can be shipped directly by rail and truck to stores across the country, aided by the efficiency of a single national distributor with a network of salesmen no small business could alone afford. Also, a growing share of sales are to large-volume contract purchasers, such as a New York restaurant chain that has commissioned several lines of restaurant tableware. All of this helps assure the Gils that physical growth also means financial growth, but they do not take this as a permanent lease on success. That will come only from more and better Bennington products in the right places at the right prices—and *that* can come, as the Gils see it, only from skill, originality and efficiency born of continuous experiment.

JANE FISKE MCCULLOUGH

A TOWN

POSTMISTRE

HANSON CARROLL, one of America's leading young photographers and a resident of Norwich, is shown above with the town's postmistress as he sets up his unique experiment in pictorial journalism for "A Town Takes Its Picture."

If typical residents of a town create the corporate image of their community—he reasoned—why couldn't self-portraits offer a composite likeness having even more flavor and depth? This is how he describes his project:

"I've noticed that people, when they see the pictures I've made of them, often ask: 'Why did you take it *there*?'; or their discouraging comment is: 'Oh, you've got my worst side!'

"The idea developed, then, that if people took their *own* pictures, selecting their own backgrounds, the results might please them—and also interest others in seeing how people like to see themselves.

"These pictures were made from a tripod-mounted camera, fitted with a long release to the shutter. The subjects picked their own locations—ones which they felt were appropriate to their positions in the community. And when they were posed to their satisfaction they squeezed the shutter release.

"To give continuity to the pictures, familiar faces were chosen. It is through these faces that a portrait of the life a small town, Norwich, is attempted."

TAKES ITS PICTURE

ORGANIST

GROCER

NOTES ON LIVING IN A VILLAGE

All villages are exceptional. It is the essence of a village not to be quite like any other village, and the villages of no state display a wider variety than those of Vermont. What is important about them all, Norwich among them, is that they contrive to remain villages, in spite of changes in population and seeming variations from tradition. . .

The village of today . . . is what has survived from many villages of the past . . . A long past helps it to accept without disturbance the hastening and often clamorous present. So much that was once radically new has become accepted, respectable and even, in due course, somewhat old-fashioned. What was good in the past, like Town Meeting, survives on its own merits, not because a conscious effort is made to preserve it. Norwich does not, and does not wish to be, a museum; it is a living village that simply happens to have a lot of the past in its present. . .

It was a city dweller, Alexander Pope, who declared that the proper study of mankind is man. For the study of man a village is as good a place as any other, but almost inevitably it widens into a study of man in his environment. A village has vast horizons . . . is a balanced sort of place, with every aspect of the living world represented. Better still, it is not self-conscious. The exhibits are not arranged; they have a natural evolution behind them, a reason for being. . .

The pattern of village life, in all its instructive variety, has done much to form the intellectual heritage of America. A village offers all the essentials of a liberal education, in a judicious mingling of human affairs with those of a far older and wider world. WILLIAM A. BREYFOGLE IN *Speak to the Earth* (by permission THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, 1961)

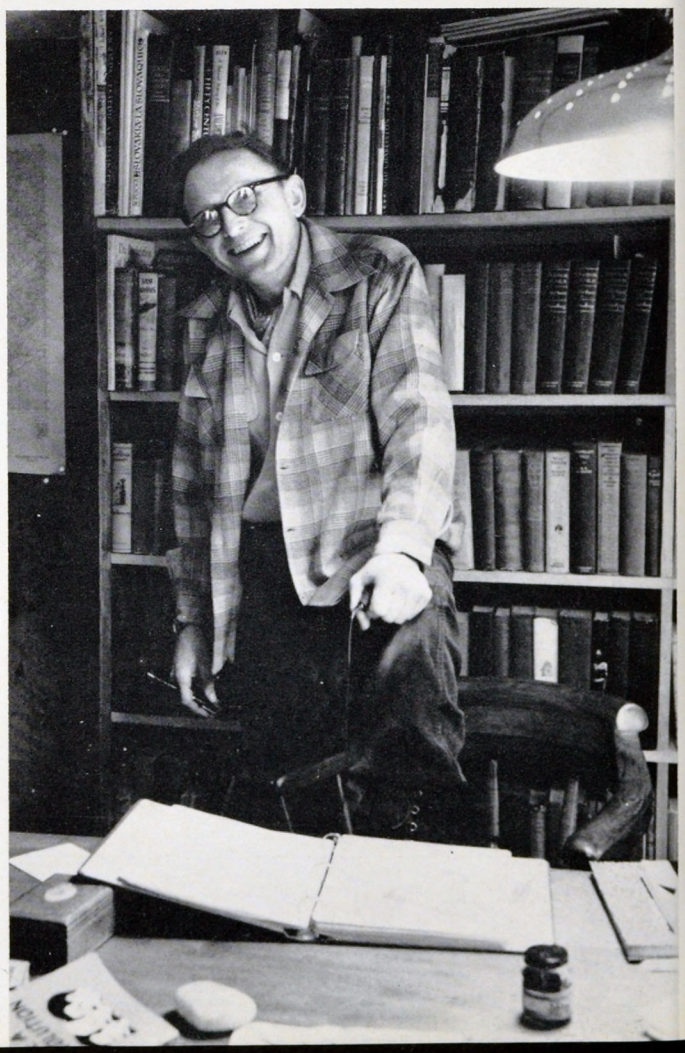
ARTIST

P
OF
CHM.
Y.C.

TEACHER

STOREKEEPER

PLAYWRIGHT



SCHOOLBOY

AMER

MINISTER

Vermont CHEESE

LOUISE ANDREWS KENT

Photograph by Joyce Wilson

It will probably not surprise anyone to hear that Mrs. Appleyard feels strongly about cheese. "*Processed Cheese!*" is something she hisses when she feels in a profane mood. In calmer moments she admits that it has certain virtues: no one is likely to be tempted to eat too much of it and any that is consumed leaves real cheese for those who appreciate it. She can talk herself into quite a mellow mood by such statements, though of course she doesn't really mean a word of them.

Fortunately, honest, time-ripened cheese is still made in Vermont, but no one makes Mrs. Appleyard's favorite kind. She happened to read about how Roquefort cheese was discovered. During a thunder storm, a French shepherd took shelter in a cave and began to eat his lunch of bread and ewe's milk cheese. Seeing his sheep frightened by the storm, he hurried out to herd them to a safe place. Weeks later he came back to the cave, which had a strange smell. You guessed it—the cheese had turned to Roquefort.

Mrs. Appleyard happened to have on hand cream cheese she had made herself and freshly baked bread. She quickly combined them, wrapped them in waxpaper and put the package in her cellar, which is as much like a cave as anything nearer than Smuggler's Notch.

"I will forget it," she said and conscientiously did so until one of her daughters asked her if anything had died in the cellar.

Mrs. Appleyard remembered her experiment. She wished she had made more. It was a little like Camembert, a little like Liederkranz but with its own secret flavor too. She realized too late that if she had kept some of the cheese for a culture, her cellar might now be as famous as the caves of Roquefort but the assembled gourmets left not a crumb. She tried it again but it was never the same. Yet the ingredients are simple enough. All you need is about twelve quarts of milk from some perfect Guernseys who have just had all the green grass they want, June grass, eaten under a blue sky with great Gainsborough clouds sailing over it and plenty of bobolinks singing as they fly. Put the evening's milk, still warm, in pans on the back of the stove. You need a wood burning stove and you must be baking bread in the oven. Next morning the cream will have risen and will be quite thick above the clabbered milk. If it has not clabbered let it stand until it does. Skim off the cream. Beat it to amalgamate it well, but not enough to make whipped cream of it. Use a wire whisk, not an egg beater. Put it into a bag made of four thicknesses of sterilized cheese cloth. Hang the bag among the apple blossoms where the shade will dapple it. The blossoms were still pink, Mrs. Appleyard remembers, and there were scarlet buds already opening among the leaves.

Did this pink and gold and chrysoprase shade give the cheese its warm gold color? Well, frankly, no. That came from the June grass. You can color cheese, Mrs. Appleyard has read, by boiling marigolds or grated carrots in the milk. No doubt you could also add U. S. certified color but not with the idea of pleasing Mrs. Appleyard, thank you.

In about two days no more liquid will drip from the bag. It should feel almost dry. Now all you need do is scrape every bit of it out of the bag. stir it well with a fork, put it into a Sandwich glass dish, chill it and eat it with enormous dark red strawberries and sugar.

Mrs. Appleyard does not really advise trying to make Camembert-Liederkranz out of it. Perhaps if the old cheese factory at Appleyard Center had not fallen down before she came there and happily took up the hobby of keeping buildings in a more or less erect position, she might have been tempted to be a cheese maker. Yet on the whole it may be better for the village to smell of apple blossoms, lilacs, new mown hay, crushed mint and wood smoke, each in its season. However, if anyone succeeds in making Appletree Camembert, please let Mrs. Appleyard know. She'll be right along to sample it.

The best cheese for cooking, she thinks, is natural cheddar. Cheese souffle, cheese fondue, cheese biscuits are all delicious made with rather mild cheddar. Dry cheddar, grated, is fine for topping casseroles and to serve with onion soup. Aged cheddar is excellent eaten with toasted Montpelier crackers. Perhaps Mrs. Appleyard's favorite cheese dish is Welsh Rabbit as Mr. Appleyard used to make it. Calling it a "rarebit" is as out of place as putting tomato soup, flour or milk into it. It is, Mr. Appleyard used to state firmly, a rabbit in the same sense that a Cape Cod turkey is codfish and a Bombay duck is a very dead fish, so dry that it splinters.

WELSH RABBIT

Here is how to make a Welsh Rabbit (for six).

- 2 T. butter
- 1 cup beer
- 2 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 t. dry mustard
- ½ t. salt
- ¼ t. cayenne
- 2 pounds mild soft cheddar cheese cut into small pieces.
- 2 egg yolks lightly beaten

Mr. Appleyard used a silver chafing dish, but an electric skillet is a good substitute. The chief thing to remember is that cheese dislikes high heat or long cooking. It shows its resentment by getting tough and stringy. Melt the butter. Pour in the beer and bring it quickly to a boil. Add the seasonings. Reduce heat. Add the cheese. Stir well so that the small cubes into which you have cut it will melt quickly. Your assistant—you must have one—is toasting English muffins. She also beats the egg yolks in a small bowl and presents them at the right moment. You add a good dollop of melted cheese to the eggs and beat them together with a fork. Add the mixture to the contents of the skillet. Stir well until it thickens. The muffins are ready, hot and buttery.

Dunk one into the rabbit. It will emerge veiled in ambrosia and gold, dripping, pungent, and succulent, ready to go on a hot plate and receive a final spoonful of rabbit. Beer foams in tall glasses. Major Gray's chutney circulates around the table.

Mrs. Appleyard says: "After all there's nothing better than Vermont cheddar."

Nobody contradicts.

CHEESE MAKERS

Up in South Troy Kraft makes Cracker Barrel cheddar. Cheddar cheese is also made at Cabot, at Plymouth by John Coolidge, by Crowley at Healdville and by Stanley Wisell at East Wallingford. Cottage cheese is made at Cabot, Burlington and St. Albans. Economou Cheese Company at Hinesburg makes Greek Aspro and Italian Ricardo. Economou and Richmond Co-op Creamery both make Mozarella. Colby, like cheddar but more porous and crumbly, is made at Bellows Falls, by Coolidge, Crowley.

A jack-of-all-trades high-in-the sky

STEEPLE JACK

As pictured by HANSON CARROLL

WHEN THE STEEPLE of Barnet's century-old Congregational church was struck by lightning last year they called in Cecil Percy from Waterbury Center.

Vermonters with such difficult problems, way up in the air, have been doing so ever since Percy decided to go into steeple jacking for himself. This was when he turned twenty-one, twelve years ago.

In these years Percy, usually with two helpers, has built or rebuilt some seventeen steeples, many chimneys smokestacks and radio towers.

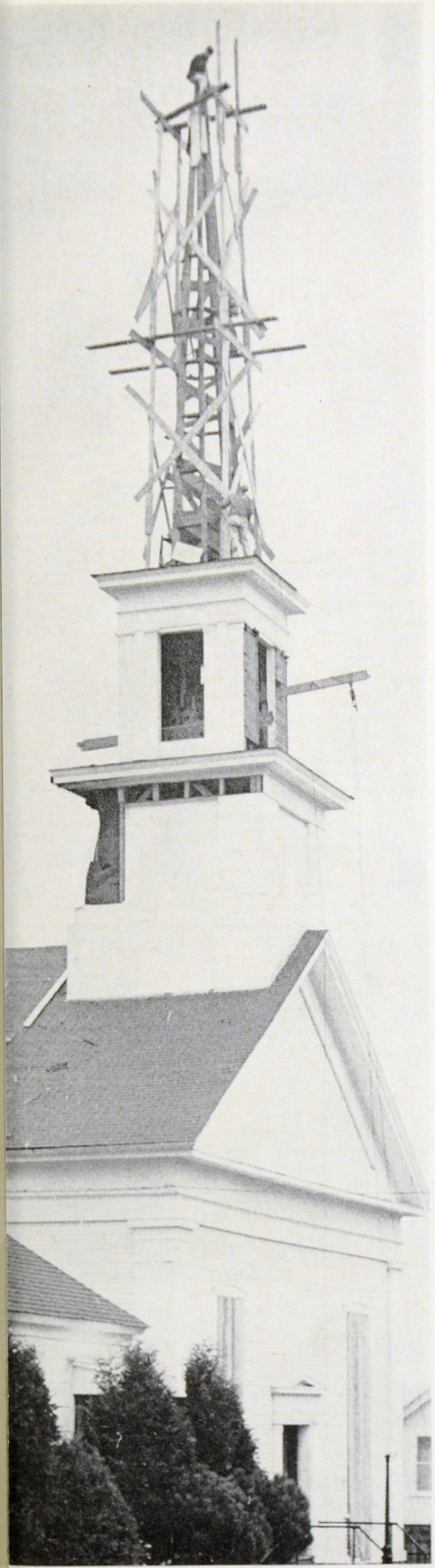
A steeple jack is more than a human fly. He must be master of many trades—those of mason, carpenter, electrician, slate and sheet-metal roofer and painter—and even know how to gold-leaf weathervanes.

Working hundreds of feet above the ground, Percy says, in all seasons and weather, "is nothing to fear if you know everything is solid." He adds: "I spare no effort to be sure everything *is* solid."

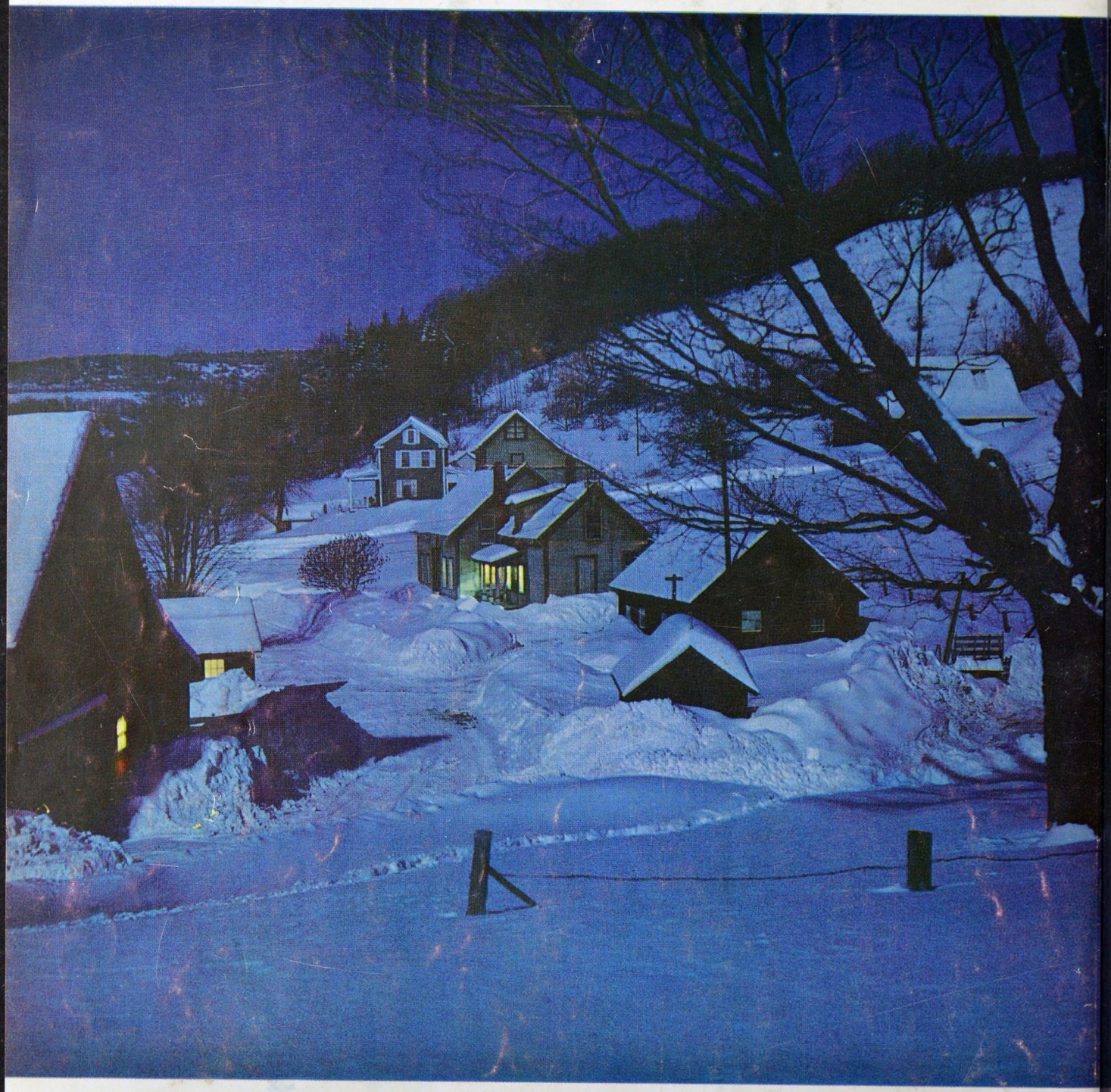
He's never had a serious accident but insurance for workmen and liability comes high in this trade. Out of every $100 in payroll, $18 of it goes into insurance.

The 110-foot high Barnet steeple had to be rebuilt completely, sheathed and painted. It turned out that its timbers rested in the church roof and partly on ceiling overlays. Otherwise it was routine for all except the *Vermont Life* photographer, who recorded some of the dizzy perspectives.

HELEN D. BARRY



Ralph Barker
Aug 11-1909
Rope broke



But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of light
His reign of peace upon the earth began

JOHN MILTON